

PlayStation plus

COMMAND & CONQUER

VIRGIN GOES TO WAR

HEXEN

id WORKS ITS MAGIC
ONCE MORE

TOMB RAIDER

EIDOS' ROCKET
FROM THE CRYPT

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PLAYSTATION
GAME **REVIEWED**
AND RATED

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GamePro Magazine

93%

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Winner of the US Open, there's only one player that leads the world: Pete Sampras, and there's only one smash, hit tennis game: **Sampras Extreme Tennis**.

"The shot system is incredibly instinctive, with smashes and lobs pulled off with ease, and net play requiring all the fast reflexes of the real thing... the crowd even gasp if the ball tips the net! Every aspect of the game is polished until it shines"

PlayStation Plus

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Mean Machines PlayStation



Available Now



"Perfectly positioned smashes,
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PlayStation Plus

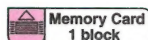
me
hit.

SAMPRAS EXTREME TENNIS™

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GamePro 93% • Play 90% Classic • PlayStation Plus 90% Playability



THE POWER
OF PLAYSTATION

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Command & Conquer

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Campaign Supernova

Already victorious on the PC, Virgin now blitzes the PlayStation with the award-winning strategy monster, *Command & Conquer*. Never in the field of videogaming was so much owed by so many to so few. *PlayStation Plus* is the first to take Westwood's hallowed classic for a test run, and returns from battle more than just a little war-torn.



Win! A Land Rover

22



To celebrate the PlayStation launch of *Command & Conquer*, Virgin is giving away a classic army Land Rover to one lucky reader. In camouflage colours and emblazoned with the cool *Command & Conquer* logo, this is one prize worth fighting for.

VideoGames: The Tabloid Travesty

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Special Report

Videogames can kill you. They'll make you fat, aggressive and stupid. Concerned parents are queuing up to share shock 'revelations' like these with the national press. In this special report *PlayStation Plus* checks the facts, looks at the evidence and tries to keep an open mind about these so-called Evil games...



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CATCH UP
WITH WHAT'S
GOING ON IN
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News

MORE RESIDENT EVIL 2 SHOTS • TFX TAKES TO THE SKIES
• PLAYSTATION HOME PROGRAMMING KIT • TOSHINDEN 3 PREPARES FOR BATTLE • ACCLAIM'S RATTLESNAKE RED GOES 3D

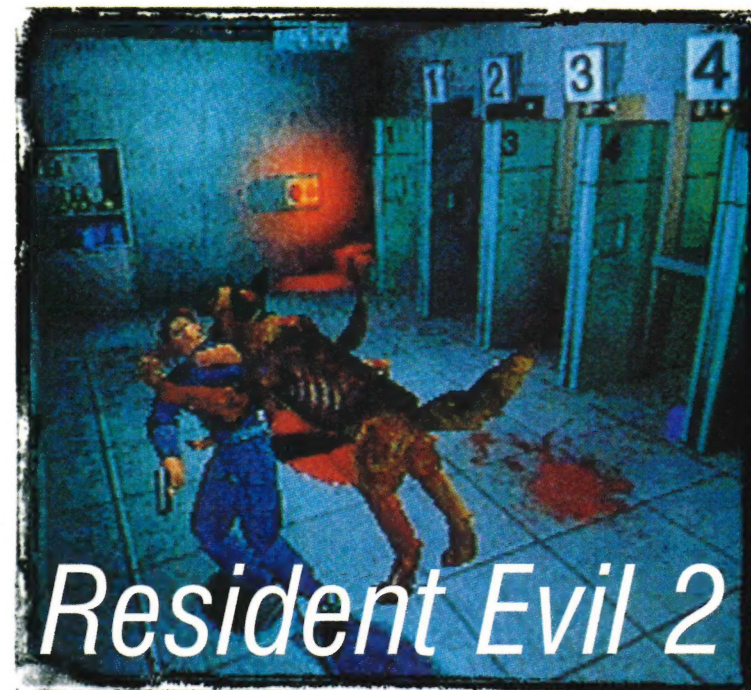
WITH THE PLAYSTATION YAROEZ SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE AT THE BEGINNING OF NEXT YEAR, THE FUTURE FOR THE SONY MACHINE IS CERTAINLY BRIGHT. WHILE DEMOS PROGRAMMED FROM BEDROOMS ARE UNLIKELY TO RIVAL PRODUCTS FROM CAPCOM AND NAMCO, IT MAKES THE PLAYSTATION MORE ACCESSIBLE TO AMATEUR PROGRAMMERS WHO PREVIOUSLY HAVE CONCENTRATED ON THE PC. WHO KNOWS, RESIDENT EVIL 3 COULD BE THE RESULT OF HOURS OF HARD WORK BY SOME BLOKE HOLED UP IN A FLAT IN HACKNEY - STRANGER THINGS HAVE HAPPENED.

STEVE MERRETT,
EDITOR



CAPCOM HAS RELEASED more shots of what is easily the hottest PlayStation property of next year, *Resident Evil 2*. As we revealed back in issue 13, the story continues on from the first game when Jill and Chris return from the mansion and are admittedly to hospital. Weeks later the nightmare begins, when zombies are found wandering the city streets and sucking on the blood of the panic-stricken civilians. Police recruit Leon Kennedy takes on the task of ridding the city of the undead invaders, and is joined by motorcycle chick Eliza Walker, who is also desperate to survive this nightmare.

The game starts in the Raccoon City police department which is already overrun by zombies, which stagger clumsily towards Leon, arms-outstretched, trying to grab hold of his neck. Armed with an automatic pistol he can keep them at bay,



ROOKIE COP LEON RETURNS TO THE NIGHTMARE OF RACCOON CITY, WHICH IS ONCE AGAIN OVERRUN BY BLOOD-THIRSTY ZOMBIES.



RESIDENT EVIL 2 BEGINS IN RACCOON CITY'S POLICE DEPARTMENT, WHICH IS INSTEAD WITH ZOMBIES STAGGERING AROUND, ARMS OUTSTRETCHED. WITHIN SECONDS THE BLOOD-BATH BEGINS.



while rummaging through the lockers to find new equipment. As well as zombie cops, Leon and Eliza must also watch out for the Alsations, which pace through the basement of the police station, hungry for blood. During a recent visit to Japan, PlayStation Plus was lucky enough to actually see *Resident Evil 2*, or *Biohazard 2* as it is known in the far east, in the flesh. Therefore expect more exclusive information and screenshots in next month's issue.



Out Now

On the shelves this month...

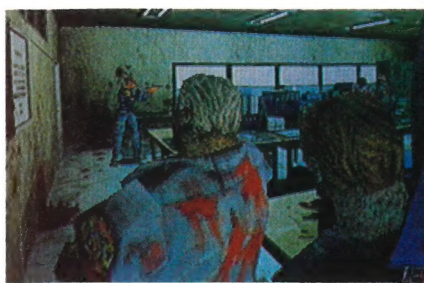
STAR GLADIATOR

Capcom's first 3D beat 'em up is an absolute stunner, and is one of the best beat 'em ups available for the PlayStation. Awarded 91% this issue.



BROKEN SWORD

Revolution's gorgeous point 'n' click is by far the most enjoyable PlayStation example in the genre, and it's funny too. Awarded 90% in issue 14.





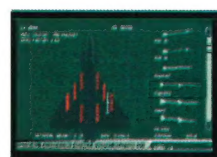
OCEAN HOPES to release the PlayStation's first full-blown flight simulation when *TFX* emerges from the hanger bay at the beginning of next year. Originally developed by British developer Digital Image Design, the PlayStation conversion is being handled by Japanese software giant Imagineer, who are working on what is pretty much a straight conversion of the award-winning PC game.

Based on the legendary EuroFighter which is due to enter service near the end of the century, *TFX* is more than just the average aerial shoot 'em up other PlayStation flight sim tend to be. Virtual pilots will have to battle with real-life obstacles such as pulling high-g turns and engaging intelligent enemies, as well as embarking on



countless missions from aerial dogfights to flying low over the terrain to take out ground-based objectives.

Including an arcade mode as well as a simulation option, *TFX* is currently about 80% complete and therefore is running a little slowly at the moment. However, Imagineer is hoping to rectify this problem before the game is released, but quite how they're going to squeeze all the controls of an aircraft into one tiny joystick remains to be seen.



NBA in The Jam

KONAMI IS SET to release another slick basketball sim when the obviously-titled *NBA In the Zone '97* tips takes to the court early next year. Rather than a straightforward '97 update of the currently available *NBA In the Zone*, this all-new game is said to be a complete redesign of the original, taking the basic elements of the first game and drastically improving them. *NBA In the Zone '97* has pushed back the visual boundaries of the original by boasting motion-capture which is far more fluid, and also taking the attention to new levels as players are instantly recognisable thanks to extremely realistic facial texture-maps!

NBA In the Zone '97 is more than an impressive display of graphical finesse though. Konami has concentrated on improving and expanding the gameplay, by cramming in loads of extra moves includ-



NBA IN THE ZONE '97 LOOKS MUCH BETTER THAN THE ORIGINAL.

ing enhanced defensive and rebound actions, hard checks and some super cool slams and dunks. Players will also sample the more managerial side of basketball, as player now tire on court and careful substitutions must be made to allow for fatigue.

Catering for up to 8 players with the aid of two multitaps, *NBA In the Zone '97* tackles both the arcade and simulation elements of basketball, but whether it will manage to towering above Sony's own *Total NBA 2* remains to be seen when both take to the court in January 1997.



STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2

The Street Fighter series continues with this, the most advanced and impressive installment to date. A must for enthusiasts, it was awarded 92% in issue 14.



MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY

Another beat 'em up series that keeps coming back for more, *Mortal Kombat Trilogy* is a mix of all the best bits from the first three games. Awarded 90% in issue 14.



PANDEMONIUM

Pandemonium is now the PlayStation's premier platformer, even over-shadowing Sony's very own Crash Bandicoot. Awarded 91% in this issue.



FIFA '97

Hopes were high for Electronic Arts' new baby, but were dashed when it turned out to be rubbish. Awarded a very disappointing 64% in this very issue.



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Toshinden 3

TAKARA CONTINUES to battle away at the all-conquering Tekken 2 by releasing yet another installment in its beat 'em up series, *Toshinden 3*. Unsurprisingly it's a progressing of the previous games rather than a complete overhaul, and features many of the characters from the original, with both Eiji

Shinjo and Kayin Amoh returning to the battle arena. Of course, there are new characters to try out, as well as extra attacks to play around with.

Takara has concentrated on making each of the fighters look more realistic than ever, with intricate texture-mapping and facial features making *Toshinden 3* even more detailed than the hallowed *Tekken 2*. As yet precise details on the combat system



are sketchy though, so whether *Toshinden 3* will continue the trend and remain a watered-down alternative of Namco's classic Tekken remains to be seen.

MISSING: PRESUMED LOST

Or not as the case may be. Just what has happened to those games we previewed all that time ago...

DEADLY SKIES

First sighting: Issue 7 (April 1996)

Deadly Skies was an odd concept to say the least. It was meant to be a one-on-one flying and fighting game, as two pilots take to the skies and shoot each other down. However, to aid them each pilot could pull off special moves. Just like in a beat 'em up, each pilot had an energy bar and could pull off a special move. Anyway, there has been no sign of the game since the preview way back in April, but according to JVC it has been delayed to make way for the new "Wing Over" (flight sim/cricket game combination) game. *Deadly Skies* is now scheduled for a winter '97 release.



TILT

First sighting: Issue 1 (October 1995)

Tilt was supposed to be the PlayStation's definitive pinball simulation, and it had already wowed PC owners with its rendered graphics and multiple tables. After a preview in issue 13, where we examined the game in impressive detail. Since then? Nothing... However, news now reaches us that next month we will receive a review copy. There haven't exactly been an enormous amount of pinball games on the PlayStation, but Tilt should fill the gaping holes in the hearts of a thousand pinball hungry gamers. Unless, of course, it turns out to be rubbish, which would be a massive shame for all concerned.



Ace Combat 2

AFTER THE DISAPPOINTING release of *Air Combat* last year, Namco hopes to wipe the slate clean with an all-new sequel. With graphics to die for, *Air Combat 2* expands on the original by squeezing in a load of new aircraft as well as a greater selection of theatres of war to enter and mission objectives to tackle.

The texture-mapped landscape graphics are perhaps the most impressive feature of all though, and are both extremely detailed and surprisingly different from one another.

Released in Japan at around Christmas, *Air Combat 2* should hopefully see an official UK release at the beginning of next year.



JUST AS SQUARESOFT prepares to unveil the monstrous *Final Fantasy VII* in Japan early next year, Konami is set to release the very first traditional RPG for the UK market. Released in January, *Suikoden* follows the story of a group of rebellious adventurers courageous enough to challenge the Scarlet Moon Empire. The once-peaceful realm of Barbarossa has turned rotten under the influence of some supremely nasty witch bitch, who has infested the land with foul monsters and evil demons. Of course, she's top of the hit list but before our hero gets to chop off her off, he must first battle through the hundreds of minions.

Suikoden adopts the

traditional Manga visual style, with sickeningly cute characters contrasting against the dark landscapes of Barbarossa. During the quest there over over a hundred characters to befriend, recruit up to a maximum of five at any time and using their unique skills to solve puzzles throughout the game. Combat also features heavily, utilising an innovative war system that enables battles between vast armies, offering tons of attacks and special assaults. Add to this a load of magic spells to learn and master, as well as powerful runes and artifacts which help to make an adventurer's life that bit easier, and you have a classic RPG in the making.



INTERPLAY HAVE at last released screenshots of its forthcoming platform romp, *Lost Vikings 2*. The sequel to the critically-acclaimed 16bit game, this sequel once again follows the clumsy capers of the infamous Norse trio, namely Baleog the Fierce, Olaf the Stout and Eric the Swift. Although the release of the game has been delayed slightly, Interplay is confident that *Lost Vikings 2* should appear just after Christmas. Expect a full preview next month.

FOR £599, THIS SUPER-COOL BLACK PLAYSTATION COULD BE YOURS.



PlayStation Yaroze

SONY HAS AN ANNOUNCED the release of a new PlayStation. Sort of. With a planned launch of late February 1997, the PlayStation Yaroze is a home development kit that will allow videogame enthusiasts and amateur programmers to code games and demos for Sony 32bit machine via a PC. Styled in cool matt black rather than dull grey, the PlayStation Yaroze comes complete with

the all relevant software and peripherals necessary to connect it to a PC, and is therefore perfect for all budding backroom programmers who reckon they can program the next *Tekken*. However, the price of fame and indeed the Yaroze doesn't come cheap. Costing just under £600, this is an expensive toy that will probably appeal to computer whizzkids with extremely rich parents.

TESTED

PREDATOR GUN

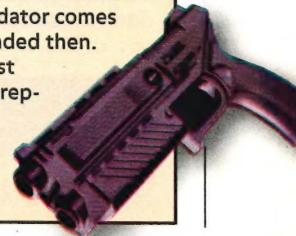
Released by SpectraVideo, the Predator Lightgun is priced £29.99 and is available now. Call them on 0181 902 2211.

The gun itself is plastic, styled on Sega's *Virtua Cop* guns and is grey. It looks chunky but a little drab, with a slightly naff looking LED strip running down the side, which flashes when fired. The gun is a bit front heavy, so continued use may leave you with slightly aching arms. A start button and select button are moulded in each side of the weapon, the latter used to cycle through in-game functions and to lob grenades in conjunction with the trigger. There are also two switches which toggle the autofire on and off.

DIE HARD TRILOGY

Tested on *Die Hard 2*, the *Virtua Cop*-style section of *Die Hard Trilogy*. Apart from a few slightly dodgy shots, it's great! Admittedly not quite as accurate as the mouse, it's a lot more fun and certainly adds to the realism of your gaming experience. Reloading, shooting, throwing grenades and launching rockets are all easily handled, and using the gun makes this great game even better.

The Predator comes recommended then. And for just £29.99, it represents quite good value.



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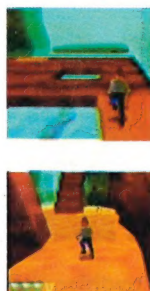
Road Rage



ROAD RAGE IS KONAMI'S ANSWER TO WIPEOUT 2097.

As **WIPEOUT 2097** continues to dominate the top of the charts, Konami emerges from the pits with what it hopes will pip Psygnosis' classic to the finish line. **Road Rage** is a futuristic driving game in which space-age hovercraft skim around four spectacular courses. True, a similar concept to that of **Wipeout 2097**, but **Road Rage** is an all-out racing game and favours raw speed as opposed to road kill. Based on the arcade game, the PlayStation version of **Road Rage** boasts four speed classes, as well as a wide variety of craft to sample, all of which perform very differently from one another. It's not due for release until February '97 though, so the coin-op will have to suffice for now.

Rattlesnake Red



ACCLAIM HAS ANNOUNCED the arrival of another game hero for the PlayStation, **Rattlesnake Red**. A bearded cowboy with a passion for gals and gunslinger, **Rattlesnake Red** stars in a 3D platform game of the same, which is said to a cross between **Crash Bandicoot** and **Super Mario 64**. Developed in America by Sculptured Software, who have previous worked on conversions of **NBA Jam** and **Mortal Kombat**,



Rattlesnake Red will be going for his guns in April. Expect a more in-depth preview in a future issue of **PlayStation Plus**.

RECOMMENDED

WIPEOUT 2097

We recommended it last month, and by God we're going to recommend it this month too. Why? Because it's bloody great, that's why. A classic game, and no mistake.



COMMAND & CONQUER

The PlayStation strategy game comes of age, with the scintillating conversion of the PC smash. If you are at all cerebral, this is the game for you. Marvellous.



STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2

Once again Ryu and pals return to the PlayStation in a smart conversion of the smash-hit arcade game. 2D fighting at its very best.



MotoRacer

DELPHINE HAS ALREADY announced details of its next PlayStation release, **Moto Racer**. Published by Electronic Arts, **Moto Racer** is a motorcycle racing game that focuses on both circuit racing and motor-cross dirt biking. The game will feature slick arcade-quality graphics and realistic bike handling, and although it's not released until March '97, expect a preview in next month.

Super Puzzle Fighter X

JUST WHEN YOU thought it was safe to pick up a PlayStation joypad, yet another **Street Fighter** game comes punching and kicking onto the scene. **Super Puzzle Fighter X** is very different from the usual beat 'em ups we're all familiar with though, and places characters including Ryu and Chun-Li in a weird puzzle game environment. The game itself is similar to Sega's **Columns**, as player's match coloured gems togeth-

er to make large crystals, which can then be increased in size again and so on. Building up these super bonus gems is apparently the puzzle equivalent to pulling off a special combo move in the **Street Fighter**, but whether the characters with roundhouse kick each each time two coloured balls are matched together is as yet undecided. More on this unique puzzler in the next couple of months.



THE BLOCKBUSTER VIDEO CHARTS

Last month's positions in brackets.

What's tickling your fancy in your local **Blockbuster** rental store — now with added **PlayStation**.

TOP TEN VIDEO GAME RENTALS

1. (NE) **Formula 1** (Psygnosis)
2. (NE) **Tekken 2** (Namco)
3. (1) **Resident Evil** (Virgin)
4. (NE) **Final Doom** (GTI)
5. (2) **Track and Field** (Konami)
6. (3) **Destruction Derby** (Psygnosis)
7. (8) **Adidas Power Soccer** (Psygnosis)
8. (7) **Twisted Metal** (Sony)
9. (2) **Ridge Racer Revolution** (Namco)
10. (RE) **Return Fire** (Warner)

TOP TEN RENTAL VIDEOS

1. (NE) **Broken Arrow**
2. (NE) **Twelve Monkeys**
3. (NE) **Birdcage**
4. (NE) **Toy Story**
5. (1) **Get Shorty**
6. (2) **Heat**
7. (3) **Casino**
8. (4) **Trainspotting**
9. (5) **Jumanji**
10. (NE) **Up Close and Personal**



TOP TEN RETAIL VIDEOS

1. (NE) **Jumanji**
2. (NE) **Toy Story**
3. (NE) **X-Files: Master Plan**
4. (NE) **Trainspotting**
5. (NE) **Lord of the Dance**
6. (1) **Braveheart**
7. (2) **101 Dalmations**
8. (NE) **Goldeneye**
9. (NE) **Seven**
10. (NE) **Little Princess**

BLOCKBUSTER VIDEO

Floating Runner™

Quest for the 7 Crystals

- ◆ 14 breathtaking levels to complete
- ◆ Seven vast worlds to conquer
- ◆ Total freedom to explore the stunning 3D environment
- ◆ Packed with original power-ups, special weapons and magic spells to help you in your quest
- ◆ Choice of playing angles

Crystal Land is in the clutches of evil. Seek out the 7 magical crystals and battle with dark forces in this revolutionary non-linear adventure.



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Competition

YOU THOUGHT
YOU'D EXPERIENCED AN
ADRENALINE
RUSH WITH
WIPEOUT
2097?
NOW TAKE
THE BUZZ
TO EVEN
HIGHER
LIMITS
WITH
THIS
COOL
SONY
HI-FI.

'WIN! Wipeout 2097

A SONY DOLBY PRO LOGIC MINI HI-FI PLUS 5 LIMITED EDITION WIPEOUT 2097 BOX SETS

Experience the ultimate adrenaline rush with *Wipeout 2097* as

Psygnosis celebrates the gut-wrenching G-forces of anti-gravity racing by giving away a state-of-the-art Dolby Pro Logic Hi-Fi worth £550. The MHC-991AV is a five-speaker monster complete

with Dolby Pro Logic and Digital Surround processor, 3-CD Changer and RDS Tuner, making it the perfect sound system to groove on down to the cool cuts of the *Wipeout 2097* soundtrack.

In addition the winner and five runners-up will also receive a limited edition *Wipeout 2097* box

set worth £100, containing a copy of the game, the soundtrack on CD and vinyl, a Designers' Republic T-shirt and also a sheet of day-glo *Wipeout 2097* stickers.

HOW TO ENTER...

To enter simply answer the following questions and send them to *Wipeout 2097* Competition, PlayStation Plus, EMAP Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU. Entries should arrive no later than 22nd December, and multiple entries will be disqualified. No employees or relatives of EMAP Images, nor the companies involved, are eligible to enter. No cash alternatives will be given. As ever, the Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

THE QUESTIONS...

1) Which recording artiste does not feature on the *Wipeout 2097* soundtrack?

- A) Chemical Brothers
- B) Ash
- C) Photek

2) What is the name of the hidden ship in *Wipeout 2097*?

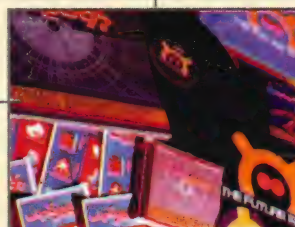
- A) Piranha
- B) Scorpion
- C) Skoda

3. Sony's Mini Hi-Fi has RDS. What does RDS stand for?

- A) Radio Data System
- B) Record Deck Stabiliser
- C) Really Dark Speakers

Runner up prize

2097



Hold on to your shorts little man..... here's your chance to play with the Big boys!

NBA JAM EXTREME



Hold on to your shorts little man - this is your chance to play with the big boys! NBA Jam Extreme takes Basket Ball to new heights, featuring ballistic graphics and ultra-addictive gameplay. Full 3D rotoscoping makes our 170 NBA superstars look prettier than the originals and now there's even more control from a range of killer 'Extreme' moves. You also get to eat clouds more than ever with an even wilder selection of anti-gravity, out-to-lunch monster dunks! Boomshakalaka! Don't look down!



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Command & Conquer: *Campaign* **Survival**



Dec '99
Company: VIRGIN
Price: £44.99
Players: 1
Genre: STRATEGY

*"We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds. We shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender." Already victorious on the PC, **Virgin** now blitzes the **PlayStation** with the award-winning strategy monster, **Command & Conquer**.*

Never in the field of videogaming was so much owed by so many to so few.

pernova





FMV SEQUENCES INTRODUCE THE OBJECTIVE FOR EACH MISSION LEVEL, HIGHLIGHT ANY AREAS OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE.

By the year 2010 fossil fuels have run dry. Coal-fueled power stations slowly grind to halt, and within a matter of years the price of petrol has increased ten-fold as the natural resources are rapidly used up. At about the same time nuclear fuel is deemed unsafe by government watchdogs, the risk of radiation leakage is apparently increasing as safety guidelines are abolished during the digital revolution's global invasion. Without a feasible source of energy the world plunges into darkness, a powerless nightmare that seemed to last forever. Energy harnessed from solar power couldn't sustain a large city let alone an entire nation,

and the quest for new means of energy supply continued for many years.

The darkness was broken by Doctor Morbius, a revolutionary scientist who discovered the real potential of the rare mineral Tiberium. A green crystal that grows from the ground, the origin of which is unknown although its uses were quickly realised. By refining and processing the mineral in specially-designed factories, the normally-useless crystals can be turned into a super-fuel capable of running massive power stations with startling efficiency. Better still, Tiberium is



(ABOVE) GUN TOWERS ARE EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE ANTI-INFANTRY WEAPONS, BUT AREN'T SO GOOD AT ENGAGING ARMoured TARGETS.



SPOILS OF WAR

Learning the strengths and weaknesses of your opponent's army is half the battle, working out which weapons are most effective against specific targets. The GDI and Brotherhood of NOD army rosters differ greatly – NOD units tend to rely on speed to avoid damage while the GDI prefer more heavily armoured vehicles. Although many of the missions start by giving the player a selection of troops and vehicles, to construct more the relevant installations must first be built. Therefore infantry reinforcements can only arrive if barracks have been created, and tanks can only be produced if a weapons factory is built. Each unit also costs money and uses power to produce, two luxuries which commanders aren't initially blessed with...

the product of an organic fungus which naturally reproduces, so there is an almost infinite resource from which to mine the ore.

Unsurprisingly, demand for Tiberium sky-rocketed, with every nation desperate to control the precious mineral. War soon erupted as two opposing groups fought over possession of the land where Tiberium grew, struggling against one another in the

vain hope of eventually defeating the opposition and using the Tiberium as a means of controlling the entire world.

WORLD WAR III
Command & Conquer focuses on the battle for Tiberium, from both the angle of the good guys, the Global Defence Initiative, and also the bad boys, the Brotherhood of NOD. As a commander recruited to either army, the overall objective of the game is to gradually wear down the

opponent by emerging victoriously from a series of small skirmishes, before going on to finish the enemy off completely. Of course it's never quite this simple, and whether you're rooting for the GDI or are in favour of NOD, the enemy is just as keen to have Tiberium to themselves as you are.

The Global Defence Initiative is the futuristic equivalent of the United Nations, and is responsible for maintaining peace across the world, ensuring mad dictators and terrorist groups are duly crushed whenever they rear their ugly heads. However, not everyone agrees with the GDI's methods, and slowly the Brotherhood of NOD has built up an army to rival the Global Defence Initiative, and is slowly building up its empire by controlling the Tiberium, using the mineral

MINIGUN INFANTRY

Armour: Light
Weapon: 5.56mm Chaingun
Essentially the pawns in this game of global chess, the minigunner forms the bulk of both the GDI and NOD forces.



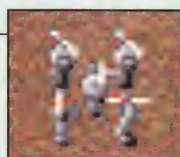
GRENADE INFANTRY

Armour: Light
Weapon: Grenade
Groups of GDI grenadiers can throw a barrage of explosives that is easily capable of crippling buildings. Grenades can also be lobbed over barriers.



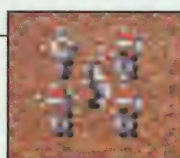
ROCKET INFANTRY

Armour: Light
Weapon: Rocket launcher
Although effective against heavier opponents such as the Abrams tank and APCs, NOD rocket infantry are extremely prone to being run over.



FLAMETHROWER INFANTRY

Armour: Light
Weapon: Flamethrower
NOD only. The most effective weapon against other troops, the only negative aspect of the flamer is that it explodes when shot, wiping out any nearby units.



COMMANDO

Armour: Light
Weapon: Rifle with silencer
GDI. Equipped with a long-range rifle which can pick enemy troops out from a distance. Ineffective against armoured targets.



ENGINEER

Armour: Light
Weapon: None
Engineers have one sole use: to capture enemy buildings by running inside of them. Because they are unarmed they ideally need to be escorted by a minigun squad.





GLOBAL DEFENCE INITIATIVE

Side with the good guys, the GDI, and the awesome Orbital Ion Cannon is at your disposal. There is also the hefty Mammoth tank to lead you into battle, first you need to construct a weapons factory...



1: GUARD TOWER

Usually placed along the perimeter of the base, the guard tower will automatically engage an attacking enemy unit with a high-velocity machine gun.

2: ADVANCED GUARD TOWER

Capable of engaging air and ground targets, the advanced guard tower is more heavily defended than the guard tower, and is equipped with a rocket launcher.

3: LABORATORY

Although the GDI cannot actually build this structure from the menu, it appears later in the game and is home to revolutionary Tiberium scientist, Doctor Morbius.

4: WEAPONS FACTORY

The weapons factory provides all the light and heavy vehicles for the GDI army, including both ground and air-based units.

5: BARRACKS

Construct a barracks to train infantrymen for battle. It can produce mini-gunners, grenadiers and engineers.

6: COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE

The communications centre is equipped with radar which scans the immediate area, picking up both friendly and enemy units.

7: ADVANCED COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE

An upgrade of the standard communication centre, this installation acts as a satellite uplink for the Orbital Ion Cannon.

8: REPAIR FACILITY

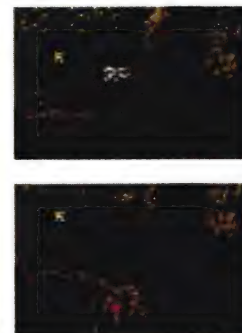
This facility is capable of repairing damage to any vehicles, although it's a slow process and fairly expensive.

9: CONSTRUCTION YARD

As centre of the army's home base, the construction yard is responsible for building the various installations available.

10: ADVANCED POWER PLANT

Only available later in the game, the advanced power plant churns out enough energy to fuel some the more power-intensive structures.



AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MISSION THE LANDSCAPE IS COVERED IN DARKNESS. AS YOU EXPLORE, MORE OF THE BATTLEFIELD IS REVEALED.

ASSAULT CYCLE

Armour: Very Light
Weapon: Minigun/Rockets
Extremely fast and manoeuvrable, the NOD Perfect for eliminating troops using cannons, but can also engage heavier targets.



DUNE BUGGY

Armour: Light
Weapon: Machine gun
Another super-fast light vehicles, NOD's dune buggy is equipped with a machine gun making a ideal for engaging enemy foot soldiers.



HUMM-VEE

Armour: Light
Weapon: 7.62 Chaingun
GDI's equivalent of the dune buggy, the Humm-Vee is extremely fast and is equipped with a high-calibre machine gun, perfect for mowing down troops.



APC

Armour: Medium
Weapon: .50 calibre Machine gun
The GDI's APC is equipped with weedy machine gun, primarily used to carry troops to the front lines. With up to five soldiers carried at once.



GDI GUN-BOATS CRUISE ALONG RIVERS, FIRING ROCKETS AT ENEMY UNITS PATROLLING THE BANKS.



to force the smaller nations into submission.

The path of the game very much depends on which army you choose to side with. Pick the GDI and the struggle against the Brotherhood of NOD is just as important ensuring the safety of civilians during battle. However, the NOD aren't quite so politically correct, the evil bastards knocking off innocent bystanders without blinking an eye. The campaigns for each army are different too, and rather than fighting the same battle from another perspective, there are approximately 25 individual missions each, the GDI fighting through Northern Europe while the NOD battle across the Gulf.

GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT

Although *Command & Conquer* is primarily a strategy game it's very much filled with action rather than arm-chair commanding, and

requires a combination of natural reflexes and careful battle planning to emerge victorious at the end of the game. Gameplay is essentially split into two parts: there's the resource management section of the game, in which a base camp is constructed and an army gradually built up. Then there's the actual combat element of the game, where the player guides their army across the landscape, in search of the enemy base. Mastering both aspects of *Command & Conquer* is vitally

important, and battles are never won solely on a battle plan or combat skills. Thankfully the initial levels serve as a helpful introduction to the game, allowing the player to familiarise themselves with the various aspects of *Command & Conquer's* gameplay.

Although a completely mouse-driven game on the PC, the PlayStation version of



Command & Conquer relies on the joystick. Individual troops and tanks are selected and moved simply by clicking on them and then on their destination, while multiple units are highlighted by dragging the cursor over each of them. They can then be assigned to a joystick button to speed up the usually laborious process of switching between units.

Combat couldn't be easier, the cursor automatically changing to a targeting cross-hair when placed over an enemy. Because all units, both friendly and opposing, are artificially intelligent,



they will react to enemy presence without orders, defending themselves if attacked while you're off tackling another part of the battle. Units can also be assigned to guard an area, relentlessly bombarding a strategically-important target such as a bridge with bul-

lets, and can be ordered to escort unarmed vehicles like a Tiberium Harvester, fighting off enemy units that stray too close.

ALONE IN THE DARK

At the start of each mission the battlefield is completely blank, apart from the small area of land where your army is deployed. The terrain is gradually uncovered as you explore, the dark veil pushed back as scout bikes and foot soldiers scour the landscape for enemy presence. A home base should be built before progress can be made though, setting up the mobile construction vehicle and kick-starting the development process by building a power plant. At the start of a mission you are awarded a small monetary sum with which to construct a basic centre of operations.

Although Tiberium must soon be harvested to provide the steady cash flow needed to develop the home base. Thus a Tiberium refinery is built, and the harvesters sent off to explore the surrounding terrain for the precious crystals. Within minutes your bank balance begins to increase, and more construction options become available. Barracks can be built to train reinforcements, while weapons factories churn out tanks and other armoured vehicles. Communications Centres scan the area for enemy units, SAM Sites protect against aerial attack and repair facilities struggle to patch up any damage before the next enemy onslaught begins. One of the beauties of *Command & Conquer* is that new vehicles and buildings

M2-F BRADLEY

Armour: Medium
Weapon: 70mm Cannon
A NOD light tank that is highly manoeuvrable, the 70mm cannon will easily tear through light armour and also the Bradley can crush soldiers under its tracks.



M1A1 ABRAMS

Armour: Medium
Weapon: 120mm Cannon
The most common GDI armoured vehicle, designed to rip through the armour of even the toughest enemy unit. It's also faster than the NOD M2-F Bradley.



MOBILE ARTILLERY

Armour: Medium
Weapon: Ballistic charges
Capable of levelling buildings within seconds, and is also capable of firing over great distances. It's prone to attack and therefore it needs close-quarter protection.



MLRS

Armour: Light
Weapon: 227mm Rockets
This slow and lightly armoured GDI missile truck is capable of engaging targets at long distances, showering them in a hail of highly explosive shells.



PYRADON FLAME TANK

Armour: Light
Weapon: Twin flame cannons
NOD's flame tank is only effective at close range, spits two streams of fire that burn slowly causing great damage to troops and vehicles.



STEALTH TANK

Armour: Light
Weapon: Rockets
NOD's secret weapon, a tank that is capable of sneaking through enemy front lines thanks to its advanced cloaking device. It is armed with rockets.



Name

To: Warwickshire County Council

Department of Health

Petition against Dominic Wheadon

We, the undersigned, wish to submit an official complaint against Mr Dominic Wheadon of 13 Turret Grove, Coventry.

Despite repeated requests from residents Mr Wheadon refuses to remove the attract hordes of undesirable tourists to the street and causes frequent disruption in an otherwise quiet, respectable area.

Mr Wheadon also refuses to remove the skunks, turtles and bandicoots which continually escape from his garden and foul the footpaths and grass verges.

Lastly we would demand that Mr Wheadon be restrained from playacting scenes and disturbance all night long, the PlayStation video game in his garden, as he creates noise

Name

Address

Gillian Sparkling-Bain 17 Turret Grove

David Sparkling-Bain

Mr Joseph Brennan

Professor C. Hobbs

Mrs J. Hobbs

Mrs. W. Collins

Mr G.C. Collins

Elizabeth Cobb

George Healy Hayman

Judge A. Higgins

3 St. John's Way

14 Carnegie House, Inglewood Rd.

14 Carnegie House, Inglewood Rd.

26 Chester Close

26 Chester Close

4 Rymington Ave

40 Inglewood Road

32 Turret Grove

SONY



PlayStation

DO NOT

UNDERESTIMATE

THE POWER

OF PLAYSTATION



BROTHERHOOD OF NOD

The Brotherhood of NOD isn't as organised as the GDI, and as such they don't have the luxury weapons factory which can be constructed on the battlefield. Instead all reinforcements are flown in.



1: OBELISK OF LIGHT

This power-intensive defence laser will automatically track a nearby enemy unit, striking out with a high-powered blast which can easily cripple a tank within seconds.

2: POWER PLANT

The single, standard power plant is more than capable of meeting all the energy needs of a medium-sized base, although more are needed as it gradually expands.

3: REFINERY

The refinery slowly processes Tiberium into its basic component elements, which are then converted into credits. Comes complete with a Tiberium harvester.

4: SILO

A lightly armoured structure that has no other use but to store refined Tiberium. They can store up to 1,500 credits of processed Tiberium each.

5: HAND OF NOD

The NOD equivalent of the GDI barracks, this is the building in which infantrymen are trained for war.

6: TEMPLE OF NOD

The Temple of NOD is the centre of the NOD communications network, and is therefore extremely well protected against attack.

7: SAM SITE

An automatic defence system which targets any airborne GDI units, firing missiles which are quite capable of destroying aircraft in a single shot.

8: WEAPONS DELIVERY RUNWAY

Rather than building armoured vehicles on the battlefield, the Brotherhood of NOD relies on weapon drops for reinforcements.

9: TURRET

A high-calibre gun that is primarily used to protect against invading tanks and armoured vehicles. It is heavily armoured and therefore relatively difficult to destroy.



BY THE END OF A MISSION THE BUILDING OPTIONS ARE EXTENSIVE, RANGING FROM FOOT SOLDIERS TO AIRBORNE OCRA ATTACK CRAFT.



XCR MAMMOTH TANK

Armour: Heavy
Weapon: Dual cannons/Missile racks
An extremely cost-heavy tank to construct, slow but protected by thick armour. Engaging light targets with its cannons, the rockets are most effective against tougher enemies.



MOBILE CONSTRUCTION VEHICLE

Armour: Medium
Weapon: None
The heart of both the NOD and GDI base camps, responsible for churning out new buildings.



HARVESTER

Armour: Heavy
Weapon: None
The Harvester scours the terrain for clumps of precious Tiberium crystals, scooping up buckets of the valuable mineral and taking it back to the refinery where it's then converted into money.



HOVERCRAFT

Armour: Heavy
Weapon: None
Simply serves as a troop carrier, dropping off reinforcements and leaving before it's attacked by the enemy.



CHINOOK

Armour: Medium
Weapon: None
Like the hovercraft, the Chinook is simply a troop carrier rather than an attack craft, and is used to transport units across rivers and the like. Extremely prone to attack from SAM sites.



PATROL BOAT

Armour: Medium
Weapon: Missiles
Scans the coastline for enemy presence, the rocket launcher allows the gunboat to take out enemy units.





Opinion *Command & Conquer* is one of those rare delights that effortlessly combines engrossing gameplay with slick presentation, and is a game that's both easily accessible but also satisfying in the long term. Thankfully the joypad serves as a responsive control system, and the sheer number of missions ensures that this is a game which is not easily defeated. Immensely challenging, absorbing and enjoyable to play, this is a PlayStation monster that bears all the hallmarks of the classic original. **AS**

(LEFT) THE GDI ORCA ATTACK HELICOPTER IS CAPABLE OF CAUSING SERIOUS DAMAGE WITH ITS RACK OF SIX ROCKET PODS, BUT MUST THEN RETURN TO BASE TO REFUEL AND RELOAD.

are introduced throughout the game rather than all appearing at the very beginning. You therefore have to work hard to get the GDI's hefty Mammoth tank, but as a result it's all the more satisfying when you finally muster up enough cash.

PULLING RANK

Mission objectives vary greatly throughout the game, and are detailed in slick FMV briefing at the start of each battle. At first it's simply a case of eliminating all enemy resistance by locating and destroying their base before mopping up stray units. Things get a little more complicated later in the game, as small groups are sent on reconnaissance runs in which they must penetrate the enemy's base to steal a hidden missile cache, and key military figures are targeted for assassination and therefore must be protected from attack at all costs.

Surprisingly there's a strong plot that flows from start to end, as the Brotherhood of NOD gradually increase in size and strength and the GDI begins to buckle under the increasing pressure. Morale-boosting speeches make the player feel as though they're actual-

ly fighting for a cause, and the reality is aided further by convincing acting during the brief video clips, and also by some sharp, action-packed rendered sequences. Unlike the stereotypical image of a strategy game, a difficult and overwhelming beast with all the visual gloss of a four colour pie chart, *Command & Conquer* is beautifully presented, with graphics and sound to rival its absorbing gameplay – these FMV cutscenes increase the game's visual appeal no end, and not only carry the storyline but also display the PlayStation's video playback capabilities to the full.

INTELLIGENT AND ATTRACTIVE

The in-game graphics are also pretty damn cool. The sprites are actually well animated and pretty convincing. Considering the average soldier is no more than five millimetres tall, it is full of character, charging enthusiastically at the enemy when ordered, or jogging on the spot when there's a lull in the action. Equally, the vehicles look just as impressive, the tiny tanks trundling realistically over the gravelly terrain and rotating their turrets to fire at an enemy.



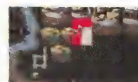
Both the music and sound effects complement the graphical style and the pace of the game perfectly, with a combination of up-beat trance-style tracks and hard rock anthems giving the gameplay an aggressive edge. There's loads of dramatic speech too, as troops acknowledge each order and the feminine voice of the computer calmly announces that your home base has been destroyed.

Command & Conquer is jam-packed with missions, more so than even the PC original. To add to all the missions from the PC game, the PlayStation version also contains the extra objectives featured on the Covert Ops add-on disc, as well as ten

never-seen-before missions, unique to the Sony machine – this brings the total up to around fifty in all, and while there's no two-player link option as offered with the original, there are more than enough battles to last for months to come. Lasting appeal is enhanced by the non-linear design of the mission structure too, there's more than one path to success and therefore many different ways of completing the game.

The only negative criticism that can really be aimed at *Command & Conquer* is the control system, which is initially awkward to use. The joypad doesn't offer the same level of speed or precision as a mouse and so fluidly switching between units and attacking during a heated firefight can be difficult. This problem is rectified with a little practice though, but the joypad still never quite manages to recreate the unparalleled responsiveness offered by a mouse.

That said, *Command & Conquer* still remains as engrossing and enjoyable as ever, and is proof that war games needn't be the dreary yawn-fests they're usually portrayed as.



UNITS CAN BE ORDERED TO CONCENTRATE FIRE ON A SINGLE SPOT. THIS MAKES THE TASK OF PREVENTING ENEMIES FROM CROSSING BRIDGES MUCH EASIER.

PSX RATING...

Graphics : 90
Animation : 87
Sound FX : 88
Music : 90
Lastability : 93
Playability : 89

91

Any super hero can swim mighty rivers



Competition

WIN!

A COMMAND & CONQUER LAND ROVER!

COURTESY OF VIRGIN INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT



IT'S WHAT THE
DISCERNING
MAN ABOUT
TOWN WILL BE
DRIVING NEXT
YEAR.

Win a jeep? Like, a *real* jeep? Yup, as part of *Command & Conquer's* PlayStation onslaught, Virgin is giving away a one-off *Command & Conquer* Land Rover worth over £2000! This four-wheel drive monster is a soft-top military-style jeep, painted olive green to avoid detection from the pesky NOD terrorists and decorated with the smart *Command & Conquer* logo. Powered by a meaty Diesel engine, this beast is equally comfortable churning across muddy dirt tracks as it is cruising the highways and byways of this fair isle, and even has a collapsible canvas top perfect for those summer Sunday drives.

HOW TO ENTER...

To enter simply answer the following questions and send them to *Command & Conquer* Competition, PlayStation Plus, EMAP Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU. Entries should arrive no later than 22nd December, and multiple entries will be disqualified. No employees or relatives of EMAP Images, nor the companies involved, are eligible to enter. No cash alternatives will be given. As ever, the Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

THE QUESTIONS...

1) What does GDI stand for?

- A) *God Dang It*
- B) *Great Danish Infantry*
- C) *Global Defence Initiative*

2) What is the break-horse power of a Series III British-built 109 Land Rover powered by a 2,286cc, four-cylinder petrol engine with Zenith carburettor?

- A) 77 bhp at 4,350 rpm
- B) 12 bhp at 4,350 rpm
- C) 987 bhp at 4,350 rpm

3. What is the overall length of a 109 V8 standard model Land Rover?

- A) 220 inches
- B) 175 inches
- C) 540 inches

* The actual prize may vary from the jeep pictured.



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KIDS GAME IN DRUG AD ROW

AN ad for a Sony computer game aimed at kids as young as three has been blasted as glamorising drugs. Tory MP Jerry Dicks called it "an outrage".

The magazine ad for wipeout show teenagers slumped in chairs who appear to have over dosed.

The letter E is always in capitals — like a reference to Ecstasy.





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Hexen



Hexen is the sequel to the top PC game *Heretic*, a sword and sorcery fantasy RPG, and continues its story. All the ridiculously named characters are here, but what are they fighting for this time? Apparently, the world of Hexen itself.

The universe is under an insidious assault from a trio of evil demons, the Serpent Riders. The first (D'Sparil) was defeated by the elvan hero of *Heretic*, Sidhe. However, the second Serpent Rider (Korax) has set his sights on the dimension of Cronos, and more specifically Hexen itself. Hexen is run by a tyrannical combination of The Legion (army blokes), The Arcanum (magic blokes), and The Church (vicar blokes). Their fascistic iron grip has all of Hexen in a stranglehold, and things have just gotten worse, as the three leaders of each organisation (Zedek, Menelkir, and Traductus

respectively) have entered into a dark pact with Korax. In return for their allegiance, they were be given the gift of Unlife. With the powers this affords they became near gods and totally enslaved the entire population of Hexen. Apart from, conveniently, a warrior, a cleric, and a mage. It is now up to Baratus, Parias, and Daedolon to save Hexen from it's nefarious masters. Will they succeed?

DOOMED

Hexen uses essentially the same game engine as *Doom*, however it has been substantially enhanced for this new adventure. Rather than being structured as a series of linear levels, *Hexen* is based around several giant inter-connecting maps. As you complete tasks, kill monsters and solve puzzles, more sections of the game world become available. There are lots of switches, demons and traps all over the place as in *Doom*, but due to the changes in game design it feels more realistic and atmospheric than *Doom* ever did. Leaves blow, the wind whistles, water flows...you'd be hard pushed to find a more involving game world on the PlayStation. The mon-



LOOK INTO THE EYES OF THE ENEMY, AND FEAR. THEN HIT 'EM.

JOURNEY INTO THE SINISTER UNDERGROUND CAVERNS...

Release : 1997
Company : GT INTERACTIVE
Price : £44.95
Players : 1
Genre : RPG/ADVEN

A GUARD TAST-
ED THE FULL
FORCE OF THE
CLERIC'S
SERPENT
STAFF.





THE MAGE FREEZES AN OPPONENT SOLID WITH THE FROST SHARD SPELL. THEY STAY LIKE THIS UNTIL THEY'RE DESTROYED BY YOU OR EVEN ANOTHER ENEMY. IN THIS STATE THEY CAN BE PUSHED AROUND, THEY SLIDE EASILY ALL OVER THE PLACE. IF YOU FIND LOTS OF BADDIES FROZEN IN ONE AREA IT CAN BECOME QUITE STRANGE.

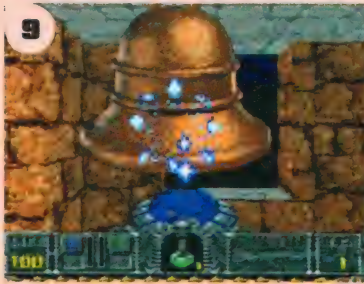
sters are placed so that each has its own habitat – for example swamp monster in a swamp – so each area has its own individual challenges and ways to deal with them. This is compounded by the fact that each character has a different set of weapons and ways of using items. Baratus (the warrior) was trained by The Legion. He is the fastest and strongest character, and has an excellent jumping ability. He has plenty of armour, and like the other characters, this can be increased throughout the game. However, Baratus can reach a higher armour level than the other two. Most of his weapons are close range, so until you get one of his top weapons you are just going to have to plough in bashing away.

Daedolon (the mage) is much weaker than Baratus, but is a master of magic, so he doesn't always need to go right up to his opponent and risk getting hit. His armour is also weaker than Baratuses', so you must be more careful about what you attempt if you choose Daedolon as your character. This makes for a more strategic game.

Parias (cleric) is sort of like a halfway house between

THAT FIRST QUEST IN FULL

The first task in *Hexen* is to release the cage that surrounds the teleporter. You start off outside in the bitter wind, with leaves blowing everywhere, and you are soon assailed by some two headed guards. These guys are a bit slow and stupid, but you're in trouble if you get surrounded on all sides. Entering the temple, your progress seems impeded. However, by smashing some stained glass windows you discover a hidden crypt. After defeating the guards you discover a key, but to reach it you have to set off a trap. If you manage to make it out alive you can use your newly acquired key to open up a new area outside the temple. After fending off a few more monsters you have to activate a sequence of switches that result in the opening of the door to the bell tower. However, before you can get into the tower you have to get another key from the cavern. Once you have grabbed the key, another trap is set off. Once you have escaped the cave you can enter the bell tower, climb to the top, and ring the bell. This removes the cage from the teleporter, and if you make it back alive, you can teleport away.



Baratus and Daedolon. He starts off with a short range mace, but the next weapon he can obtain is a long ranger Serpent Staff. A good choice if you don't want to have to pick between the mage and warrior.

ANORAK ATTACK

Each character has four weapons available to them, but they only start with one. The others can be collected as the players progress through the game, with the fourth and final weapon being composed of four separate parts. Once it has been completed you can become a titan of mass destruction. Bear in mind, though, that the magical weapons require a supply of magic to keep going. This magic can be acquired by picking up small icons throughout the world. There are two kinds (Y and Z), which are used by different weapons, so it is important to keep up your supply of both if you wish to survive.



There are also lots of other items to pick up – not only keys, but extra energy potions, bombs, and magical artifacts.

The control system is a bit more complex than it is in *Doom*, due to all the new actions our heros can perform. There is now an inventory with a jump button, and buttons to look both up and down (though whether this

will make it through to the final version remains to be seen). Combined with the more involving game world, this makes *Hexen* a distinctly different experience to *Doom*, and one that will probably remain interesting for a lot longer. It certainly did well on the PC, so let's hope this is repeated on the Playstation.



QUARTZ FLASKS ARE VITAL AS THEY REPLENISH ENERGY LOST IN BATTLE. COLLECT ALL YOU FIND.

DIFFERENT CLASS

There are three types of character you can choose in *Hexen*, cleric, mage, and warrior. There are five difficulty levels for each, ranging from fairly easy to quite hard. Each class has four weapons, both long and short range, and each character uses them differently. Their physical attributes also differ, with varying speed, jumping abilities, and armour ratings. Here is a little bit about some of the weapons.



BASH THAT BELL! UNLIKE DOOM, HEXEN FEATURES OBJECTS YOU CAN INTERACT WITH.



THE CLERIC'S SERPENT STAFF CONTAINS THE ESSENCE OF THE SACRED KALRATH SERPENT. APPARENTLY, IT SPITS OUT SPHERES OF VENOM – TWO AT A TIME – THAT KILL THE ENEMY STONE DEAD. ALSO, IF YOU USE IT WHEN YOU'RE STANDING CLOSE TO YOUR OPPONENT IT WILL DRAIN THEIR LIFE.



THIS IS THE MAGE WITH HIS "ARCS OF DEATH". IT "FIRES VERTICAL COLUMNS OF SUPERCHARGED ENERGY FROM YOUR HANDS, BLASTING YOUR FOES WITH DEVASTATING IMPUNITY". IT LOCKS ONTO ANY CREATURES IT HITS, DOING THEM DAMAGE UNTIL IT FINALLY RUNS OUT. HEAVY ON THE MANA THOUGH.



THE WARRIOR DECIDES TO SMACK THE ENEMIES' FACES WITH HIS CHUNKY SPIKED GAUNTLET. APPARENTLY EACH THIRD PUNCH DELIVERS A "MIGHTY BLOW". NEEDLESS TO SAY, THIS IS THE WARRIORS LAST RESORT, AND SHOULD ONLY BE SELECTED WHEN HE HAS RUN OUT OF MANA.



THE CLERIC DELIVERS UPON HIS ENEMIES A LONG, SLOW, PAINFUL DEATH, WITH THIS LOVELY WEAPON. CALLED THE FIRESTORM, IT "SUMMONS A GOUT OF FIRE FROM THE EARTH". THE FLAMES SEAR UP YOUR ENEMIES' ENTIRE BODY, ROASTING THEM ALIVE. IT LOOKS RATHER IMPRESSIVE TOO.



THE MAGE'S TOP WEAPON, THE BLOODSCURGE. FIRES HOMING BOLTS OF ENERGY, SO YOU ONLY HAVE TO AIM IT IN THE GENERAL DIRECTION, AND THE SPHERES OF LIGHTING DEATH ZOOM OFF ON THEIR MERRY WAY. IT LOOKS PRETTY DAUNTING WHEN YOU'RE NOT FIRING IT, LET ALONE WHEN YOU ARE.



THE WARRIOR'S BEST WEAPON IS RATHER WEAKLY CALLED QUIETUS, APPARENTLY BECAUSE IT SHUTS YOUR ENEMIES UP VERY QUICKLY. IT SHOOTS CHUNKS OF PLASMA AT YOUR FOES, AND IT'S POWERFUL ENOUGH TO CUT HUGE SWATHES THROUGH THE ENEMIES' RANKS. IT ALSO DOUBLES A SWORD.



DADE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

YEARLY ASSESSMENT / FITNESS FOR DUTY

OFFICER NAME FIRST..... John
RANK..... Detective
WEIGHT..... 195 Kilos

DATE OF LAST ASSESSMENT..... 10/3/95

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION..... 6'1"

TERM OF DUTY..... 12 years

AGE..... 36

TODAY'S DATE..... 10/6/96

Officer's physical fitness has deteriorated since last year. Failed to complete 7 mile run. Heartbeat over 160bpm. - nightmares about "terrorists dressed as clowns trying to bomb his home" are keeping him awake.

PERFORMANCE ON DUTY

According to colleagues, Officer O'Rourke is a paranoid. He believes madmen are out to "gun him down" on every street corner. This has led in turn to "gun him down" on every (Luigi Donatelli) arrests on the Metropolitan Circus Clown 'Bozo' precinct and court action is pending.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Officer should be suspended from duty until further notice.
2. PlayStation video game 'Broken Sword', a detective mystery, should be removed from precinct forthwith to avoid affecting other officers.

ASSESSOR'S SIGNATURE.....



IMPOUNDED

OFFICER O'Rourke
AUTHORIZATION
DATE 10/17/96

IMPOUNDED

OFFICER O'Rourke
AUTHORIZATION
DATE 10/17/96

IMPOUNDED

OFFICER O'Rourke
AUTHORIZATION
DATE 10/17/96

SONY



DO NOT
UNDERESTIMATE
THE POWER
OF PLAYSTATION



THESE SHOTS FROM THE INTRO SHOW BLAKE GETTING CAPTURED. SCARY.



Perfect Weapon



everyone has their own idea of what the perfect weapon is. Personally I'd go for a Death Star. Sure, it's not strictly a single weapon, but just think of the possibilities afforded by a gigantic space station with a big green laser gun...

Anyway, EA's *Perfect Weapon* isn't a weapon of mass destruction. It's a game all about Commander Blake Hunter ("Earth Defence Force's top agent and martial artist"), who has been kidnapped. Blake had just fin-



BLAKE STARTS OFF ALONE IN A HOSTILE ALIEN WORLD.

ished his usual business of getting paid for beating people about the face and body when an alien slipped into his changing room and bludgeoned him to a state of unconsciousness. When he awoke he discovered that he was no longer on Earth...

He had been transported by a malevolent being called The Overlord to one of his five planets, where he must survive or risk the annihilation of the entire human



HE LEAPS FROM ROCK TO ROCK TO EXPLORE NEW AREAS.

race. You see, rather than simply having a go on his PlayStation, The Overlord entertains himself by abducting a prime example of each species and forcing them to fight for their lives one one of his hostile planets. If they die then their entire race is wiped out. Blake must find a way to get back to Earth or the human race is done for. Quite a responsibility, really. This is where you, the player, comes in. To save everyone



HE SLOWLY AND CAUTIOUSLY STARTS TO LOOK AROUND.

you have to – yes! – punch and kick lots of aliens very hard in the face. NO surprises there, then. It's a good thing your character is a martial arts expert, eh?

GLADIATORIAL

When people see *Perfect Weapon*, they go "Oooh! That looks lots like *Time Commando*!" And they are right. It does look like *Time Commando*, but *Perfect Weapon* is it's own game. It

Release : TBA
Company : EA
Price : £44.95
Players : 1
Genre : ADVENTURE

BE PREPARED

The designers of *Perfect Weapon* (ASC Games) didn't just wade in and knock up some two-bit graphics because they just couldn't be bothered to do anything decent. Oh no, they got professional artists in to do preparatory sketches. Just take a look at these...they're gorgeous.

A LITTLE MONKEY:

This little creature surely can't be an evil baddie? Or can he? Even if he is an evil bad guy he certainly looks very cute. As you can see, he isn't drawn just the once, but a staggering four times. Going by the look of our hero's expression in the bottom picture, he probably isn't too keen on him. Nasty sharp arms, too.



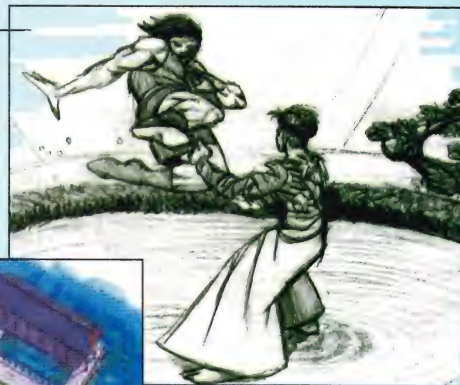
BLAKE VERSUS ALIEN:

Blake stands his ground against an aggressive local. The things in the background look sinisterly like the Sydney Opera House, but the fighters at front don't exactly look like patrons of the fine arts.



BLAKE VERSUS FLARE MAN:

Another ruck, the time with a heavily flared antagonist. Not the bonsai tree and the neatly manicured grass. This picture also shows how the artists wanted Blake to look like when fighting. Woo-haa!



A PALACE OR SOMETHING:

Looking like something out of Home and Garden, this charming piece of art is something you could show your granny. It's in colour and looks quite lovely. Although, maybe a bit too nice for a fighting game, don't you think?



combines the look of *Time Commando* with the puzzles of *Resident Evil*, and the violence of *Tekken*, and the creators have also added some tricks of their own. *Perfect Weapon* boasts a system called "Behavioural Artificial Intelligence", which is so clever there can be five enemies attacking you at any one time. These are not only humanoid opponents, but also weird aliens and the like (20 different monsters in total), and with 1300 locations spread over five worlds there should be quite a bit of variety. To battle your way through the hostile hordes you are equipped with over one hundred different moves, all accessible with



different combinations of joystick presses. If you're exceedingly skilled you stretch these out from a few simple punches and kicks into killer 12-stage combos. Like *Tekken*, there are two punch buttons and two kick buttons, as well as some defensive manoeuvres and a jump button. The jump button is used more for negotiating the un-helpfully treacherous landscape than avoiding the enemies' flying fists and fangs. There are two modes that your character can be in. Firstly, there is the exploration mode, for when your character doesn't need to do any punching or kicking. Here you can see your auto-map (which is updated as you



UNLUCKY.
BLAKE GETS SPLATED BY SOMETHING GREEN AND UNPLEASANT.

roam around the alien landscape), and you can fiddle with your inventory, and all those sort of things. When you get attacked, your character goes into combat mode. You don't get the map now, but Blake can take on the enemy with an impressive display of far-Eastern martial arts. Once all the enemies have been pacified, Blake returns to the other mode.

Even though the scenery is often very easy on the eye, there can be deadly drops that make your life as a set upon hero more difficult than it already is. To aid you on your quest, extra energy and other power-ups can be collected, and there are keys and other items that must be obtained before you can make real progress. You also



have a map which can be called up at any time, which is transparent and overlays onto the screen. This is important, as the levels are huge, and what with the action being viewed from all sorts of angles it can get a tad confusing at times.

THOUGHTFUL

One of the most impressive aspects of *Perfect Weapon* is that even though the backgrounds are gorgeous high



IN SOME SNOWY CAVES BLAKE IS SET UPON BY SOME ALIENS.



THE CAMERA ZOOMS IN TO ALLOW TO FOLLOW THE ACTION.

FIGHTING' AND FUMPIN'

The combat system in *Perfect Weapon* is rather similar to that of *Tekken*'s, what with left and right punch and kick buttons. However, in *Perfect Weapon* you have to think more carefully, it's a proper 3D so you're not always going to lash out in the right direction.

Enemies getting behind you can be a real problem – if you don't stay on guard you're not going to get very far. You are out numbered by roughly a million to one, be warned.



ANOTHER ALIENS DIES AND DISAPPEARS IN A CLOUD OF PURPLE ENERGY.



THIS SHOT SHOWS OFF BLAKE'S HANDY PERSONAL MAP.



WEIRD MONSTERS ABOUND IN EA'S PERFECT WEAPON.



resolution jobs, there is no lag time when you walk from on to another. This means that the camera changes are smoother than in other, less sophisticated games, and thus the whole experience is more coherent and atmospheric. All the backgrounds are stunning 3D ray-traced affairs, and the characters that populate them are all constructed from texture mapped polygons. The characters really fit onto the backgrounds, and there are no glitches where the characters' animations are out of

sink with their movement speed (creating the odd "skating" problem that you get in certain games). The action is punctuated with rendered cut-scenes, which gives you more of an idea about what is actually going on, and gives you a brief respite from the near constant thumping and thinking action. The developers claim that *Perfect Weapon* will be 30% adventure, 70% action – and all game. Thankfully they have chosen to include three difficulty levels of increasing difficulty, so beginners and unstoppable game animals alike will be able to marvel at *Perfect Weapon*'s bountiful delights. What's more *Perfect Weapon* will allow you to save your progress to memory card, so there'll be none of those four-o'clock-in-the-morning-and-got-up-to-the-last-level blues. Phew.

CONFUSED

The first level starts off with Blake waking up in a strange alien world. The background

seems to be an odd crystal-like combination of stone and ice, with abstract paths eroded into the rock. These paths streak off into all directions as far as the eye can see, and Blake has no idea where to go. For the moment, however, he is trapped on a plinth that is not connected to anything else. His only option is to jump for it, leaping from rock to rock, he manages to reach the main rock formation after just a few easy leaps. It seems though, that he has moved out of the frying pan and into the fire, as he is then set upon by mutant wolves. They jump, bite, and are extremely quick indeed. Punching them is pretty much useless, but kicking brings lethal results sooner. After a few solid blows with Blake's highly trained feet, the wolves are dead. Lara Croft would undoubtedly be proud.

Blake is now free to explore his new environment. Your view of the world is an isometric one, and when Blake moves near the edge of the static screen the view changes to another camera. As Blake haplessly wanders about he is accosted again – this time by humanoids. These guys are a helluva lot harder to defeat than the

wolves, and they have some nasty moves of their own. The important thing is not to let Blake get surrounded. If you do then you're not going to last long with blows raining down on you from all sides. Once you get the hang of combining punching and kicking sequences you can aptly defend yourself from these monsters, and after they have been vanquished you can continue your exploration of the barren landscape. As you progress from level to level you learn more about who abducted you and why. The levels get more complex and tricky, and you encounter more and more deadly baddies. Due to the enormous size of the game it's going to take an absolute age to complete.

To find out if it is worth it, check out the review in a future issue of the one and only *PlayStation Plus*.



AN EVIL ALIEN GETS THROWN BY THE RATHER MIFFED BLAKE.

Play the tough guy at Woolworths.



£49.99



£49.99



£49.99



£44.99

WOOLWORTHS



All items subject to availability

ANY OF THE 29 NBA TEAMS AND THEIR STAR PLAYERS CAN BE PICKED FROM THE PRE-GAME SELECT SCREEN.



NBA Jam Extreme

basketball has a vice-like grip over the hearts and minds of Americans that makes the devotion of even the saddest British footie fan look pathetic. Strange, then, that despite the best promotional efforts of mighty SKY Television, the sport has yet to make any real impact over here.

My personal theory is that we Brits prefer a sport like football that we can aspire to participating in ourselves. We dream that by cutting down on the booze binges and the late-night curries, we too could play for England. (Unless you're Gazza, of course, in which case you can

guzzle lager, pig out and still make the first eleven). Of course, the problem with basketball is that unless you've got a bizarre glandular problem, the chances of suddenly growing to a height of over six foot are remote.

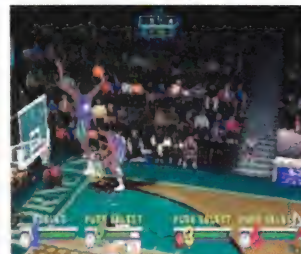
And given this less-than-enthusiastic attitude towards basketball in the UK, what's strangest of all is that software houses insist on deluging the market with a seemingly endless flow of basketball sims. Last month EA presented *NBA Live '97* (which earned itself a 90% thumbs-up from our good selves), and waiting on the subs bench there's *Total NBA 2* from Sony and *NBA In The Zone '97* from Konami.

However, of all the pretenders to the basketball throne, it is perhaps Acclaim's imminent *NBA Jam Extreme* that has the best chance of major commercial success. Converted from the popular arcade coin-op of the same name, *NBA Jam Extreme*'s main advantage is that it's been designed with accent on spectacular, outrageous fun rather than in-depth simulation, something that's likely to make it appeal to the wider audience who just want a laugh and wouldn't know Shaquille O'Neal if he slam-dunked their head in a basket.

TWO-ON-TWO ACTION!

In keeping with this less-than-serious approach to the sport, *NBA Jam Extreme* is based solely around the two-on-two game, where the action is much faster and more frenetic than in the 'standard' game. Courtesy of a multi-tap it's possible for up to four players can compete, with the CPU on standby to take up any slack. From the pre-game select screen, players can pitch any of the 29 NBA teams against each other and play as any one from each team's roster of six players. Thanks to the access afforded by the official NBA license (which is arguably the most ubiquitous sports license in videogaming), this screen is wonderfully presented, complete with logos of every team and digitised mug-shots of each player.

Although no sim by any means, *NBA Jam Extreme* does have one foot (or, at



least, part of one) planted firmly in reality. Each player possesses a set of 11 statistics, such as dribble, dunk, rebound and so on, which governs how they perform on the court. These stats are all based on analysis of how each player performed last season, so are reasonably accurate and up-to-date.

Once finally in the court, *NBA Jam Extreme*'s key differences as regards its competitors really come to light. For a start, the court is much smaller than in 'standard' games, something that's instrumental in adding to the fun no end. However, even more impressive is the fact that the 2D scaled sprites of *NBA Jam TE* have been replaced by stunning full-3D figures, each constructed from texture-mapped polygons – and best of all, they each have the face of their real-life NBA counterpart!

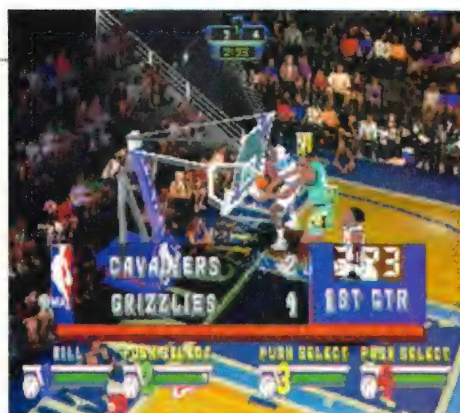
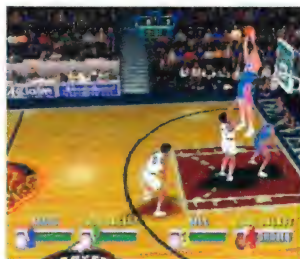


Release : DEC '96
Company : ACCLAIM
Price : TBA
Players : 1-4
Genre : SPORT

IN KEEPING WITH NBA JAM EXTREME'S USER-FRIENDLY ARCADE COIN-OP ORIGINS, PLAYERS ARE GIVEN A BRIEF RUN-DOWN OF THE CONTROLS BEFORE PLAY COMMENCES.



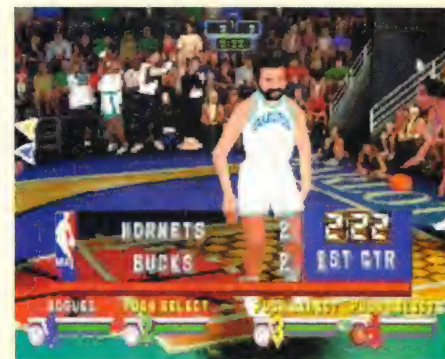
(RIGHT) HOLD DOWN THE TURBO OR EXTREME BUTTONS AND YOU CAN PULL OFF SOME STUNNING – AND IMPOSSIBLE – MOVES.



CAPTURE HIM!

As is the norm these days for any self-respecting 32-bit sports game, the animation of *NBA Jam Extreme*'s players has all been motion-captured for that touch of realism you just can't get by hand. The work was done at Acclaim's advanced motion capture studio in New York, the same place used for the development of previous titles such as *Alien Trilogy* and Frank Thomas' *Big Hurt* Baseball.

To perform the contortions required for the game's bizarre range of jukes, jumpers, dribbles, dunks and chestbumps, Acclaim drafted in Juwan Howard. Yeah, you heard right – Juwan Howard. *The Juwan Howard*. Big Howie. Well I haven't heard of him either, but apparently he's something of a big cheese in the basketball world, a star of the Washington Bullets and veteran of the Michigan Fab Five. And as he checks in at a towering 6'10", perhaps it's best not to take the piss too much.



Thanks to some stunning motion-captured animation, it's entertaining just watching the CPU-controlled characters play!

SO SIMPLE IT'S BRILLIANT!

In play, *NBA Jam Extreme*'s basic controls will be familiar to anyone who's sampled almost any other basketball games on the market. Essentially there are just two buttons to worry about, which vary in function depending upon whether or not you possess the ball: if you're in possession, one button makes your player shoot for the basket

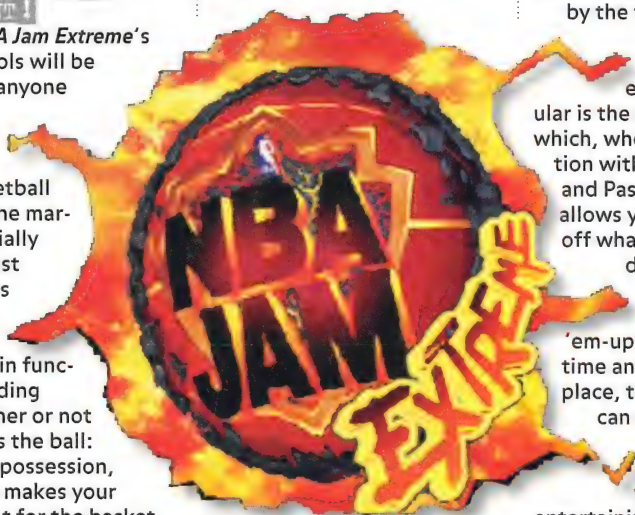
and the other makes your player pass the ball to his fellow team member; if you're not, one button makes your player block and the other makes your player attempt to 'steal' the ball from a rival's hands.

Naturally, if you and a mate are playing together, each of you controls one of the two team partners. However, if you're playing solo the CPU will take over control of your partner, intelligently moving him into the best positions for passing

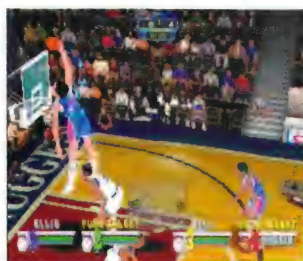
and shooting, or barging your rivals out of the way whenever necessary. Although you have no direct control over the movements of your CPU chum, you can, by pressing the relevant buttons, order when they should pass or shoot.

Unlike more strait-laced basketball sims, *NBA Jam Extreme* features a lot of rough and tumble, with players pushing each other over and generally getting extremely aggressive. However, what really separates Acclaim's game from its rivals are the unique Turbo and Extreme buttons. The Turbo button, when held down, gives your player a boost of speed, as indicated by the flaming trail he

leaves in his wake! However, even more spectacular is the Extreme button which, when used in conjunction with the Shoot/Block and Pass/Steal buttons, allows your player to pull off what can best be described as 'special moves' akin to those in a beat-'em-up! Used at the right time and in the right place, the Extreme button can result in some amazing, completely ridiculous yet massively entertaining dunks!



DURING PLAY, THE VIEW CHANGES TO GIVE YOU THE BEST ANGLE ON THE ACTION. SADLY, HOWEVER, YOU CAN'T CONTROL IT YOURSELF.

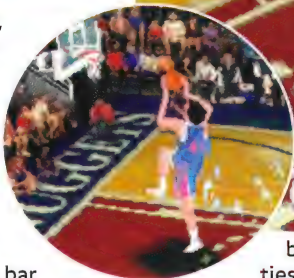


As you'd expect, there are limits on how many times you can access these stunningly powerful Turbo and Extreme moves, as set by each player's Turbo meter – a greenish bar displayed at the bottom of the screen. Every time the Turbo and Extreme buttons are held down, this meter rapidly diminishes, then slowly builds back up again when the buttons are released.

S-S-SMOKIN'

However, there are ways for the skillful to keep the Turbo bar locked at maximum for a short period of time. When this happens your player is said to be Smokin' and it comes in two flavours: Offensive and Defensive. To achieve an Offensive Smokin', your player must make three baskets in a row without the opposition scoring; once activated, your Smokin' player can perform some incredible shots and even goal-tend without fear of penalty. Alternatively, to achieve a Defensive Smokin', your player must block three shots in a row; once activated, your Smokin' player can block almost any shot and has a thief's ability to steal the ball.

However, the ultimate aim of any self-respecting *NBA Jam Extreme* player is to rack up both an Offensive Smokin' and a Defensive Smokin' at the same time. When this momentous event occurs you are declared Unstoppable which, as the term suggests, means your player is awarded almost supernatural basket-



balling abilities. Players are only Unstoppable for a few brief but intensely satisfying seconds, so you have to make the best of it while it lasts.

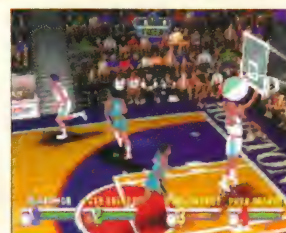
TOO WEIRD, MAF!

In addition to its vast range of bizarre moves, *NBA Jam Extreme* features plenty of weird hidden features that are accessed by secret codes and passwords (see the 'Killer Moves' panel for more on these). However, perhaps *NBA Jam Extreme*'s oddest feature is easily accessible from the pre-game options screen, namely the ability to give your player a comically swollen head! This, it has to be admitted, is screamingly funny the first time you see it, and has the genuine bonus that it makes picking out your player from the CPU-controlled characters a whole lot easier!

It's odd but entertaining features like this that are likely to make *NBA Jam Extreme* stand out from the already bustling crowd when it's released in a month or so. Admittedly, the game won't please hard-core enthusiasts – it lacks the realism and the comprehensive tournament options to do that – but for anyone who simply fancies a quick, all-action knockabout it should more than suffice. Tune in again next month for a full review.

KILLER MOVES!

If it's an exacting, authentic simulation of the noble art of basketball you're after then *NBA Jam Extreme* is probably not going to be the game for you. As you see, Acclaim's coders have taken some, er, liberties with the basic laws of nature to create a sport sim in which almost anything goes. But if the basic game isn't already odd enough for you, you can – via secret codes and the like – access special modes where you can customise the gameplay to give yourself, say, a constantly powered-up Turbo bar or maximum statistics. And if you want to get really weird you can even opt to play with a beachball or a football, give your players giant feet or compete against 'fantasy' teams, such as the Happy Team (featuring the slamdunk champ, Dufus the Clown) or the Invisible Team (home of Brained and Monkey Boy). Ooh, I think I need a bit of a lie down...



OCCASIONALLY A SMALL (BUT PERFECTLY FORMED) BLIMP WILL HOVER INTO VIEW. AND NO, I DON'T KNOW WHAT ITS PURPOSE IS!



Pitball



New 4 PlayStation
coming soon



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(RIGHT 1) THE CROW GRABS A BOTTLE AND PREPARES TO GIVE HIS ASSAILANT A VERY PAINFUL WOUND INDEED.



(RIGHT 2) THE CROW BACK-FLIPS OUT OF TROUBLE.

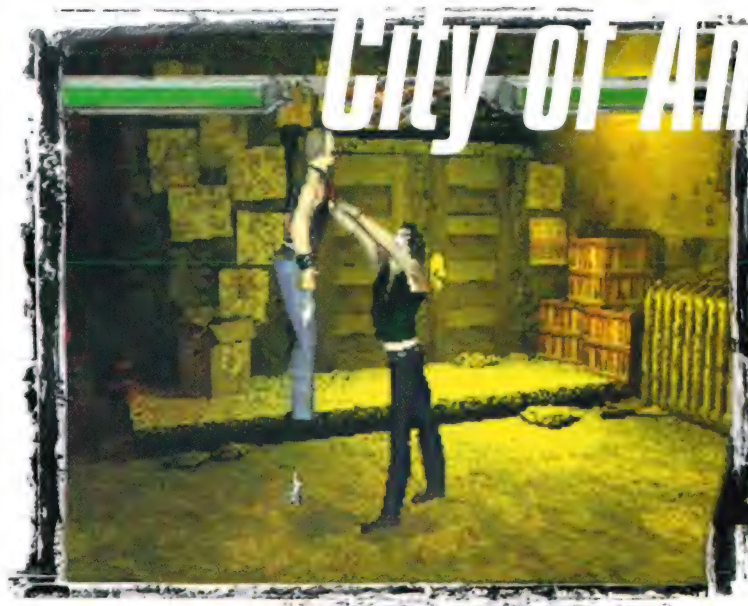


The Crow was notable for being the last film actor Brandon Lee ever made. One of the scenes in the film required Brandon to be shot with a .44 Magnum. The props department had the gun but was lacking dummy bullets to fire from it. The special effects department decided to make their own dummy bullets by removing the gun powder and primers from some real rounds. After filming the close up scenes with the weapon, a primer that the special effects people had missed had ignited some of the gunpowder residue left in one of the bullets, and the tip of that bullet became lodged partway up the barrel of the gun. On March 30th 1993 the scene was ready to be filmed. The gun was retrieved from storage, and at 21:30 filming began. At around midnight Brandon arrived on set, ready to shoot his scene. The scene was rehearsed through a few times - Brandon's character returns to his flat and is attacked by a bunch of thugs who had broken in earlier. He is shot in the chest, and falls face down on the floor. Everything runs smoothly, the gun is loaded, and real



The Crow

City of Angels



shooting commences. This time, as intended, there is a big flash and a bang when the gun is fired. This time, however, Brandon falls backwards. No one thinks there is anything wrong, and everything keeps going until the scene is finished. Once it is, Brandon fails to get up, and everyone realises just what has happened. An ambulance was called, and Brandon was rushed to hospital, but after five hours of surgery and 60 pints of transfused blood Brandon passed away.

AVENGING ANGEL

The Crow was all about a bloke who got killed by some criminals, but came back to life and had a crow following him around. He spent the rest of the film wandering round beating bad guys up, probably to vent his frustration at being forced by circumstance to look like the king of all gothics. His special

ability was being able to suck heroin out of single mothers and not ever get hurt.

In *The Crow - City of Angels*, he's back, and this time he's going to do more or less the exact same thing all over again. This time, though, The Crow's antics are to be transferred to your PlayStation, and you get to decide his every move as he once again attempts to rid the streets of human filth. *The Crow - City of Angels* is similar in style to Capcom's *Resident Evil*. You control The Crow himself, as he wanders round duffing up no good baddies. Left and right on the Dpad are used to rotate The Crow around, with forwards and backwards moving him. Occasionally he will seize the moment and perform a rather impressive back-flip to get him out of trouble. There are other buttons for punching, kicking, ducking, blocking, picking

THE CROW PREPARES TO ENTER THE STINKING UNDERBELLY OF MODERN AMERICAN SOCIETY - BUT FIRST HE MUST DEFEAT THIS UNPLEASANT BOUNCER.

things up and grabbing people by the shoulders. As you can imagine *The Crow - City of Angels* is fairly standard beat 'em. As you wander round the locations you are set upon by thugs and assorted villains. You must dispense justice in a way only The Crow can - by ruffing them up. Once you have dispatched all the baddies in one area a blue arrow appears pointing you to the next set of miscreants. Rather than a scrolling view, the screen flips from one camera to another, with you viewing the action from a variety of angles. Lying around the locations are assorted offensive weapons that spice things up a bit. Once you have picked them



Release : TBA
Company : ACCLAIM
Price : £44.95
Players : 1
Genre : ADVENTURE

up (using the pick-up button funnily enough) you can activate their death dealing potential with the punch button. Knives get thrown, sticks are swung, and crow-bars are...crowed? These toys help make your enemies antics that little bit easier, and more often than not you can even take out more than one bad guy at a time with them. Later on you get to play with some even more powerful toys, including big guns and explosive barrels which you can drop on your opponents heads. Be careful that you don't waste the gun's bullets, or get too close to the barrel when it explodes, though, now that would be a mistake.

VIOLETT VIGAR

Each level takes place in a different location from the film, and like the film the PlayStation version uses a limited pallet for atmospheric effect. The characters themselves are made up of textured polygons, and – due to the Power of the PlayStation™ can wander in and out of the screen with ease. There can be up to three opponents for you to fight at any one time, and you're going to have to be pretty skilled if you don't want to get beaten to a pulp three times simultaneously. Luckily your fellow can do all



FISTS GO FLYING AS THE CROW LAYS INTO THE EVIL PATRONS OF THE LAST CHANCE BAR. ON THE GROUND YOU CAN SEE A HANDY WEAPON. IT IS IMPORTANT TO USE THESE WEAPONS TO THEIR FULL POTENTIAL, OR YOU WILL END UP DEAD. AGAIN.



sorts of impressive back-kicks, and his roundhouse kicks are top. Some baddies can block your attempts to pick up and throw them, but it is often worth risking it to give yourself some breathing space. The most important thing to do is get a large blunt instrument to hit people with – they are near apocalyptically efficient, and after a few whacks with one of these your opponent will be feeling rather poorly.

The throwing objects are a lot trickier to get to grips with, and it will take a lot of practice before you can utilise these lethal missiles to

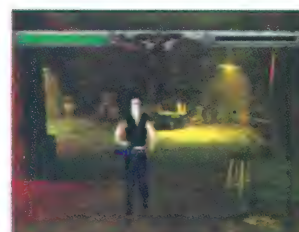


their full deadly potential. So, The Crow. Apparently the film isn't to hot and if the game is of a similar disappointing quality, then Acclaim better start fortifying their offices. The version of the game we've seen is still a long way from being completed, but hopefully by the time Acclaim have got everything running properly and looking as it should, it will be an important addition to the PlayStation's already vast library of 3D beat 'em ups, which is something we'd all like to see.

CITY OF ANGELS – THE MOVIE

The story of *The Crow – City of Angels* is set a few years after the original. A man (Ashe) and his young son are taken out because they were witness to a murder, but The Crow, once again, does its trick of bringing someone unjustly killed back to life to sort things out. The heroine of the original film (Sarah) begins to get strange dreams about this murder, and is lead by The Crow to the place where Ashe gets reborn. Ashe only wakes up when he has been taken by Sarah to her loft. She explains what happened, and after a time Ashe is convinced and goes off to avenge of his son's and his own death.

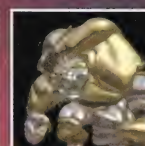
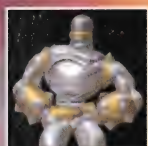
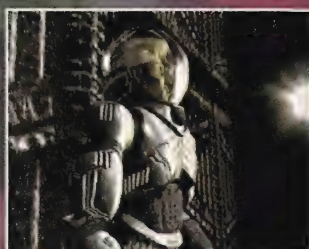
Sadly, even though the first movie attained cult status and has a legion of close to obsessive fans, the second film was largely panned by US critics and fans alike. However, you will have the chance to decide for yourself when *The Crow – City of Angels* (certificate 18) opens nationwide from November the 22nd.



Before finally scuffing the shoes of darkest evil



GRID RUN

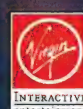


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the original *Tempest* may not be one of the most famous arcade machines of yesteryear, but it is certainly one of the most fondly remembered. It was one of the very first 3D shoot 'em ups, and although the originals graphics don't look up to much now, they were impressive at

(BELOW)
HERE'S THE
BONUS SECTION
IN MOST OF ITS GLORY.
FLY THROUGH
THE HOOPS TO
STAY ALIVE.
PLAY IT FOR TO
LONG,
THOUGH, AND
YOU MAY DIE
OF BOREDOM

the time. What has stood the test of time better is the gameplay. Cleverly utilising a very simple premise (stop the aliens getting to your end of the play area), *Tempest* had the power to transfix people for inordinate lengths of time. Now it's back, and its sinister powers have not diminished – in fact with all the new whizzing coloured graphics and throbbing music, *Tempest* is now more powerful than ever.

Tempest X is more or less a direct conversion of *Tempest 2000*, a *Tempest* update that first appeared on Atari's ill-fated Jaguar console. Despite



the Jaguar's 64bit power most the games were completely rubbish. However, *Doom* (as usual) and *Tempest 2000* were completely brilliant and for a while *Tempest 2000* was the only reason to buy a Jaguar, but now you can get it on the PlayStation. Let's just hope it's not the same sort of wasted opportunity that *Robotron-X* turned out to be...

TEMPTING

As we have already discovered, the concept is hardly complex. Your little spaceship sits at one end of a rather strange plane, and aliens come at you from the distance. The plane is divided into horizontal segments, and your ship can zip from segment to segment with ease. A rather more tricky task is dodging the aliens as they advance towards you down each strip. Not only do they shoot at you, but if they manage to reach your end of the plane then they can try and grab you. Unfortunately both of these attacks lose you a life, but you do have a laser gun to fight back with.

Killing aliens sometimes releases power-ups including better lasers, robots which help protect you, and a jumping ability (handy for avoiding the aliens' grasp). Obtaining these power-ups is the key to surviving in *Tempest X*, as without them your little ship simply cannot cope with the alien onslaught. Once you are fully toolled up, though, you have the ability to slaughter the aliens en-mass, and the jumping ability makes it very



Release : TBA
Company : INTERPLAY
Price : TBA
Players : 1-2
Genre : SHOOT 'EM UP



tricky for them to get you. If you collect plenty of power-ups then you get the super droid, who is fantastically adept at alien bashing.

Once you have killed enough aliens, you proceed to the next level where you do more of the same and you keep doing this until you die. There are ninety-nine levels, each a different shape, and if you collect enough bonus icons you can partake in a

bonus round for fun and profit. This involves flying through a series of hoops whilst also attempting to grab as many tasty bonuses as you can.

PSYCHEDELIA

As well as pulse pounding, trouser tearing gameplay, *Tempest X* also boasts some of the most colourful and busy graphics so far to be seen on the PlayStation. It looks like an explosion in a heavily stocked fireworks factory combined with the glow of a thousand lava-lamps, which is more appealing than you might imagine. There is a superb lens-glare effect, pixels flying everywhere, and a pulsing background pattern. Just looking at the screen shots is a poor substitute for actually watching the whole thing move, and playing it is even better.

The screen follows your craft around in a most attractive manner, and everything hangs together in a most slick fashion. The music is also brilliant, a very energetic old style rave soundtrack that will no doubt get you



jumping all over your front room.

There are also some other things for you to fiddle with. As well as the new all singing, all dancing *Tempest X*, there's the original version, a slightly updated version, *Tempest Plus* (with a co-operative 2-player mode), and a versus game where each player inhabits one end of the play area where they have to kill each other. As you'd expect. There's plenty of the usual baddies to avoid, and quite an unusual one player versus practice, where rather than being an enemy at the other end of the game area there's just a force field which bounces your bullets back at you. As you'd imagine, this makes for more than a little unusual gaming experience, as the bullets you sent out to kill the aliens come back at you, and if you fire too many then you are just making things more difficult for yourself.



GRAPPLING

Tempest X is given the chance to get its hooks into us next year and it will undoubtedly find many fans. However, given the one-track nature of the game, can it keep those hooks where they belong – in our heads? If Interplay can keep *Tempest X* feeling fresh and exiting for each of the ninety-nine levels then we may just have a classic on our hands. Joy!



"EAT ELECTRIC DEATH!"
QUITE. AS YOU CAN SEE FROM THIS SCREENSHOT, TEMPEST X CERTAINLY ISN'T AFRAID TO SHOW OFF THE POWER OF THE PLAYSTATION™.

JEFF MINTER: THE MAN, THE LEGEND.

If you don't know who Jeff Minter is, then you're poorly educated in the ways of the video game. Hailing from rural Wales, Minter is the epitome of all that was good about computer games in the 80s. Fearsomely bearded, he wrote all the games on the Llamasoft label single handed (co-run with his mum), and created classics like *Sheep In Space*, *Revenge of the Mutant Camels*, *Llamatron* and *Iridis Alpha*. He first game, *Hovver Bovver*, was the worlds first lawn mower simulator. As you can tell, his games are a bit different from the norm. Embracing the shoot 'em up mania of the 80's he put an individual spin on things by introducing hoofed mammals at the protagonists. His games brought new levels of excitement to game players the world over, as well as showing that – Hey! – programmers could have a sense of humour too.

As well as being one of the pioneers of shareware (now a multi-million dollar business), Minter was also completely bonkers. His nutty games are a testament to an age when anyone could bash out a half-decent computer game and become a cult hero. Sadly, *Tempest X* is the only Minter-related game on the PlayStation.



PEACE?

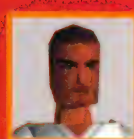
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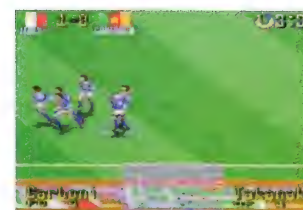
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(Right) ISS DELUXE IS PACKED WITH OPTIONS, INCLUDING NUMEROUS PITCH SURFACES TO PLAY ON. THERE'S EVEN THE OPTION TO PLAY ON RADIOACTIVE GRASS. POSSIBLY.



Superstar Soccer Deluxe

this year has seen more additions to the PlayStation league than almost any other genre. You name a racing game, beat 'em up or flight sim, and it's odds-on that there are at least one or two football games released at the same time. As regular readers of *PlayStation Plus* will know, we

are incredibly hard on crap football games, and unforgiving as we are, it seems that the many software houses developing for the Sony machine share our interest, as at least three more football games have been announced in as many weeks. Ocean are set to rival the EA license with a game endorsed by the UEFA, while Gremlin and Psygnosis have announced they are both to follow up *Actua* and *Adidas Power Soccer* respectively.

With all the forthcoming releases no doubt set to play host to motion-capture and numerous camera views, Konami are set to re-enter the footie arena which a veritable Peter Shilton of a video game — ie it's knocking on a bit, but could still surprise a few people. The game in question is a part of the Super NES classic, *International Superstar Soccer*, and as opposed to the assorted visual and aural effects 32bit owners have come to expect, Konami are playing it straight with gameplay cited as the most important factor of the conversion.

regarded as the greatest soccer game for any of the 16bit machines, and combines large sprites with a wealth of moves and instinctive gameplay. Everything lacking from the PlayStation kickarounds to date. Rather than tinker with the game engine, though, Konami's Japanese R'n'D team have ported the graphics code lock, stock, and tackle with the game viewed from one set angle and the action played across

a horizontally-scrolling pitch. Konami will be the first to admit *ISS Deluxe* is no great shakes graphically, but despite the rough edges some of the sprites are immediately recognisable. For example, while *ISS Deluxe* cannot use the names Baggio and Gullit, the Italian and Dutch sides still boast players



Release : DECEMBER
Company : KONAMI
Price : £44.95
Players : 1-2
Genre : SPORTS SIM

SOMETHING OLD...

If you're an ex Nintendo owner, the chances are that you'll have encountered *ISS Deluxe* before. It's widely

with distinctive hair styles.

Control over the players uses each of the four face buttons, with the L1 and R1 buttons also coming into play. The main buttons are used to slot passes to the nearest player, chip the ball, or attempt a shot, while the square button is pressed to add a burst of speed to the run. The one area where *ISS Deluxe* does mimic its plentiful competition is in the execution of other moves. For example, if the ball comes in from high, pressing the chip button will instigate a header, while the others double up as tackle or sliding tackle buttons. In the meantime, the more strategically minded players can mess about with the R2 button which allows the user to effect a pre-programmed set-piece — such as a counter attack or a defensive barrier. Although the game is identical in appearance to the aforementioned 16bit code, Konami have gone back to the draw-

ing board for the CPU AI, and now claim that the game features players considerably more intelligent than those of other footie games, with players rarely leaving position and working tightly within the tactics selected.

OH I SAY..

One area of the game specially extended for this PlayStation version is the commentary. The 16MEG Super NES cartridge was obviously limited in the memory allocated to digitised speech, and thus was limited to cries of 'corner' and 'free kick' when applicable. The PlayStation game, however, features a running commentary which is streamed from the CD as the game is played and is well above the standard of, say, *Actua* and *Adidas Power Soccer*.

Every aspect of the game is surmised by the commentator, with a succession of headers met with comments such as 'a header', 'and another', 'and another' every time a game of head tennis ensues in the midfield. The only down side to the speech is that the commentator has an obviously affected English voice, and doesn't so much speak with a plum in his mouth but an entire bush!



(RIGHT) HAVING SELECTED A TEAM TO COMPETE WITH, CHOOSE WHICH FOOT-BALL STADIUM TO PLAY IN. WEATHER OBVIOUSLY DOESN'T AFFECT THE PITCH IN A CLOSE DOME STADIUM.



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

If *ISS Deluxe*'s many set-pieces are proving to be a trifle difficult, the game features a practice mode which allows the user to get to grips with corners, free kicks and penalties. The former are a particularly interesting diversion, with the CPU lining up walls and dropping defenders in to prevent you scoring. Practising chips and meeting them with headers can then be repeated to your heart's content, with the move stopping if an opposing player touches the ball. If, following such intensive practice, you feel fit to take on all-comers, the game also contains a number of 'scenarios' which the player is invited to join. For example, England are 2-1 down against Brazil, and have two minutes to score as many goals. The game may then start with the timer ticking away and England about to take a corner, thus implying if England can even things via a set-piece, a last gasp goal isn't out of the question, after all...



Other areas expanded upon include five levels of CPU intelligence. If the original Super NES game had one fault, it was that the goalies were susceptible to certain attacks. Whereas most PlayStation games can't handle shots from 45 degrees, to put one in the net in the Nintendo version of *ISS Deluxe*, you simply ran towards the 'keeper, sprinted past him, and then slotted it in the net. This is still true of the PlayStation version if played on the second lowest level, but the hardest stage features goal keepers and a defensive line which would put Schmeichel and Roy Keane to shame — not to mention a forward line whose shots re-invent the phrase 'net busters!'

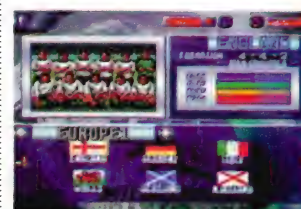
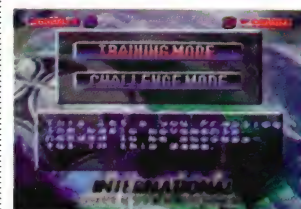
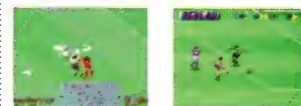
MAJOR TIPS

On loading, the game opens with a comprehensive list of options, with a full complement of international sides — Brazil, Cameroon, England, etc — each of which are ranked in order of their shooting, passing and goal keeping skills. Having selected a team and an opponent, the game is preceded by a visit to *ISS Deluxe*'s equivalent to a physio's room, wherein the fitness of each player is shown via a coloured globe. If a player is literally 'in the pink', the icon is coloured to reflect this and is marked with a happy face, while knackered players are shown as blue icons and are best substituted before the game kicks off.

Konami are hoping that 'the old ones are the best'

and that *ISS Deluxe* will wipe the floor with the likes of *FIFA '97* and *Olympic Soccer*.

The version of code we saw was approximately 80% complete, with just a few errors in the speech to rectify, and the development team are confident it will be drawing Kop-sized crowds sometime in December.



CAPTURE IT!



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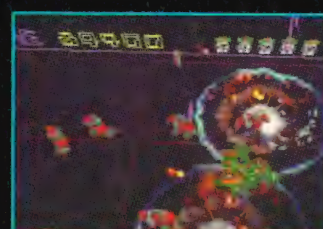
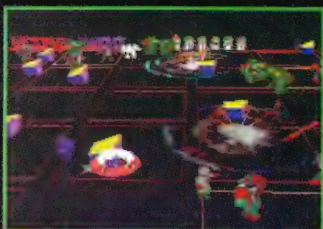
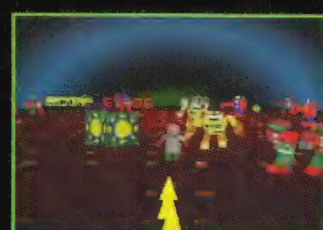
GAME



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eXtreme

gameplay

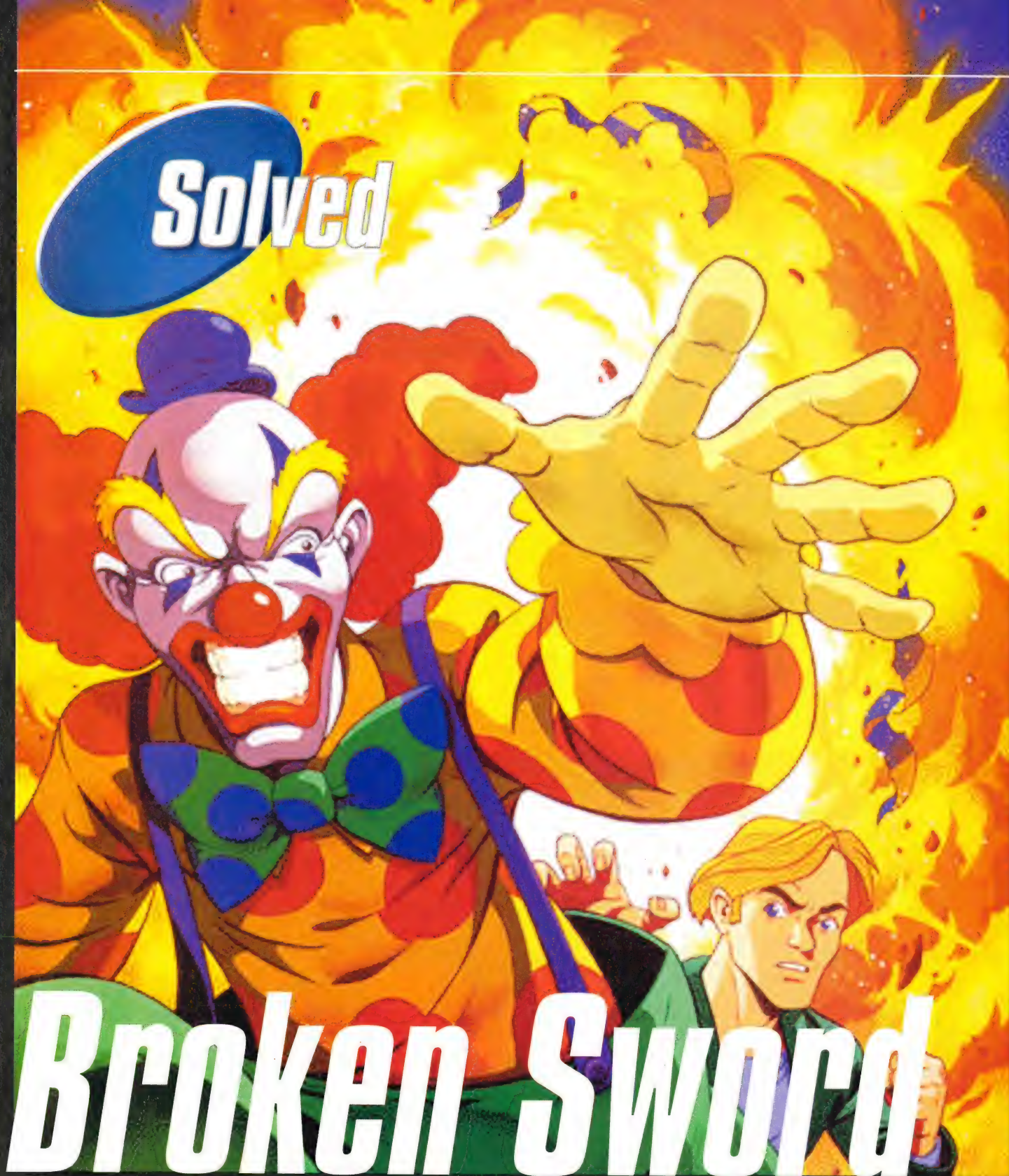
warning

ROBOX™

200 level alert

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Broken Sword

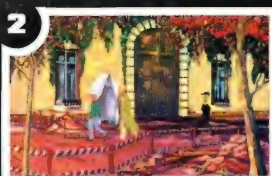
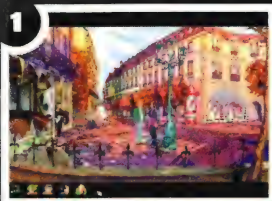
George Stobbart's holiday is far from the fun and frolics he was expecting of gay Paris. Battered and bruised in a bomb blast while touring the capital of France, Stobbart is stuck for what to do enter. Enter PlayStation Plus' comprehensive guide...



Try it before

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ACT 1: PARIS



After the explosion, pick yourself up off the floor and grab the nearby newspaper. Walk towards the roadworks, where Stobbart will be accosted by the local boys in blue. During the interrogation with Rosso, answer yes before admitting you saw a clown escaping from the scene of the crime. When the detective disappears, talk to the female photographer outside of the cafe. Discovering her name is Nico, question her about the clown and his victim, Plantard. Keep questioning her on these two subjects until she eventually gives you her telephone number.

Walk back towards the roadworks and give the newspaper to the workman. After he has disappeared take the metal T-bar from his toolbox. Walk back to the square and nip down the alley leaving off into the background. Use the T-bar on the manhole cover and climb down inside the sewers. Pick up the red nose and examine it before walking through to the next section of the sewers, plucking the ripped material from the spikes and also taking the tissue from the ground.

Climb up the nearby ladder. Immediately Stobbart is confronted by the concierge - show him Rosso's card to settle him down. Show the scrap of material to the man, then question him about the jacket until he gives you the tailor's phone number. Bid

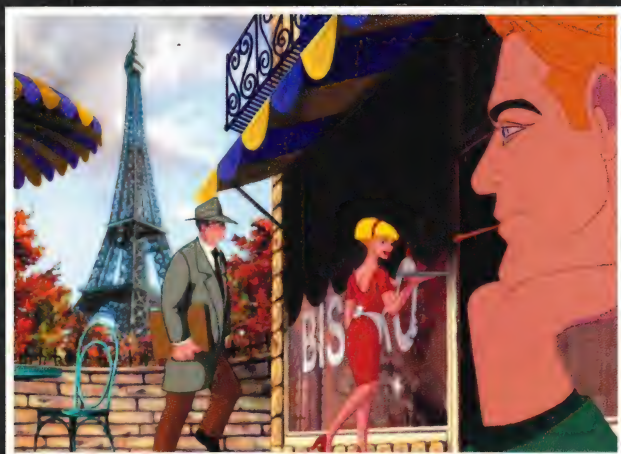
farewell to the concierge, stepping through the door and back to the roadwork. Use the portable phone next to the hole, calling up Nico to get her address. Hang up and exit to the right, thus opening the map screen.

Go to Rue Jarry and talk to the flower seller, asking her if she know where Nico's flat is. After she mutters something about the front door sticking walk through the door on the opposite side of the road. Inside Nico's apartment, show the material to the photographer and take the picture she gives you in return. Show her the nose before leaving, heading to the Rivee du Monde via the map. Enter the costume shop and show the photograph to the clerk. Ask him about the clown, show him the tissue and then flash him the photograph again. He'll mention the name Khan. Leave the shop, talking the electric buzzer with you. Back at the roadworks, call Todryk using the portable phone, asking about Khan using the photo icon.

Using this fresh information, head off to the hotel Ubu. Inside, speak to Lady Piermont about herself before showing her the photo. She'll agree to help you. Stand up and talk to the receptionist and then try to take the key from the board at the far end of the counter. The receptionist will stop you. Go back and talk to Piermont about the key and the assassin. She'll create a

diversion, allowing you to reach across and take the key when the receptionist has left the room. Key in hand, climb the stairs and use the it to open the first door on the right. Open the window and climb outside, edging along the narrow ledge and ducking inside the room on the right. Try to leave via the door, then wait as the assassin walks into the room and changes his trousers. Once he's left, climb out of the cupboard and search the trousers lying on the bed. Take the ID card and the book of matches and then leave, returning to the hotel lobby.

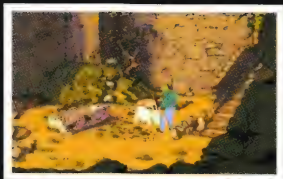
Ask the receptionist about the safe and show him the ID card. When he refuses to give you the package, talk to Piermont and show her the ID card. She'll help you get the manuscript from the safe. Head back up the stairs and into the room on the right, climbing back out onto the ledge. Drop the manuscript onto the ground far below, then leave the room and exit the hotel. You'll be searched by Flap and Guido, but they won't find anything and let you go free. Nip down the back alley and grab the manuscript, taking it back to Nico's place and examining it in detail. From the map screen walk over to the museum and examine the tripod in the centre of the room. Leave, go back to Nico's apartment to tell her you're off to Ireland, and then head for the airport.



you buy it.

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ACT 2: IRELAND

Hopefully you should have spoken to Nico before you left Paris, hearing all about Peagram – if not, speak to O'Brien who can be found sitting at the end of the bar. Talk to Maguire about Peagram and the dig, before walking to MacDevitts. Speak to Ron the poacher before saying goodbye and waiting for him to place the snare on the table. When he sneezes take the snare – you'll have to be very quick though. Talk to Sean Fitzgerald and ask him about the dig. Speak to Doyle about Peagram, the dig and Fitzgerald, then offer to buy him a beer. Ask him again and then question him about Fitzgerald once more. While Doyle is guzzling the beer, grab the towel from under his elbow.

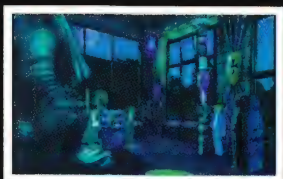
Walk across and speak to Fitzgerald about the dig before leaving the pub.

Outside, speak to Maguire, again, asking about Fitzgerald. Back inside the bar, speak to Fitzgerald again about the dig, Peagram and the gem, before questioning him about the package. After he has left and Maguire has burst in, walk back outside and turn off the beer pumps by flicking the switch next to the door.

Back inside the pub, ask Mick Leary for a drink – you'll need to finish off anything left in the glass if you ordered earlier on. Show him the ID card before using the snare on the glass washer plug. Go to the cellar and undo the bolt holding the trap door, and then return to the street. Inside the cellar, take the gem and turn on the tap, using it to wet the towel. Leave the pub and walk up along the path, towards the castle gate.

Talk to the farmer about Fitzgerald's abduction, then climb the haystack into the castle. Insert the lifting key into the wall and click on the gap at the top to climb over.

Walk up to the goat to the right of the trough and, as soon as he knocks you over, click on the plough on the far left. Having trapped the goat, walk to the ladder and climb inside the excavation. Take some plaster from the sack. Move the stone slab so it falls on the sand, then pick it up to reveal the holes underneath. Use the plaster on the holes. Use the wet towel on the plaster in the sand (if the towel has dried return to the cellar to wet it again). Pick up the plaster replica and use on the holes to enter the secret room.

ACT 3: PARIS

Show Nico the gem, then leave and head off towards the police station. Ask Moue about Marquet before leaving for the hospital. Once there, speak to the receptionist about Marquet, show her your ID and then talk to nurse Grendel until she gives you directions. Walk down the corridors, speaking to Sam the cleaner before unplugging the cleaning machine. When Sam leaves, go to the closet, open the door and take the Doctor's overall. Return to

the reception area and speak to the guy standing in the doorway.

After the conversation walk back along the corridor to the ward – try to walk through the ward. You'll be stopped by a patient. Speak to Benior, giving him the pressure thing. Talk to him about the object and then tell him to use it on Eric Sopwash (the right-hand icon). Walk into Marquet's room and talk to him, selecting every topic of conversation which appears.

When he dies you'll automatically return to Nico's apartment.

Via the map, head over to the Musee and speak to Lobinea about the manuscript and the knight. Keep questioning him and he'll tell you about Spain. When the guard is not looking open the window then, when he's walked across to close it, climb inside the sarcophagus.

When the raid starts, push the totem pole...

ACT 4: MONTFAUCON CATACOMBS

Talk to the juggler and try to stop him from the throwing the balls. Speak to the gendarme and show him the red nose, then speak to the juggler once more and attempt to start juggling again. When both the juggler and gendarme have left, use the sewer key to lift the manhole cover and climb down the ladder to the murky depths below.

Examine the arch on the far right and use the sewer

key to break a hole in the plaster. Yank the lever. Examine the mechanism inside before boarding the boat, moving the boom over to the right-hand path. Lower the chain and the hook, attaching it to the exposed cog. Board the boat and turn the winch and before entering the next room. Peek through the hole in the wall to spy on the Templar's meeting, then look again to see them

leave. Go down the steps and put the tripod on the stand in the middle of the circle. Place the gem on the tripod.



Try it before

Rent any latest release from just

ACT 5: SPAIN

Use the pressure gauge on the hosepipe near the window where it enters the house before walking inside the house. Go down the passageway to the rear of the house and when the dogs scare George back into the hallway, left-click on the armour. Go up stairs and

talk to the Countess, covering every conversation option available. Pick up the Bible from the lectern and examine the chequered pattern that covers the stand, then ask the Countess about the pattern. While Lopez collects the pieces speak to the Countess once more.

Next you'll need to solve the chess puzzle. The white pieces can only be placed on the middle column and the black King must be placed in checkmate, with the bishop at the top, a knight in the middle and the king on the square beneath the knight.

ACT 6: SYRIA

Climb the steps on the right-hand side of the scene and show the book of matches to the carpet seller. Click on the steps to walk up to the club and try to enter Club Alamut's toilet. Read the sign and ask Ultar about the sign, then return to the street below. Look at Arto, the kebab stall holder near the steps to the carpet seller, and then speak to him. Question Nejo about Arto and offer the red ball. When he asks if you mean the offer, say yes. Use the phrase on Arto and before returning to speak to Nejo.

Back at the club, give the toilet brush to the club man-

ager and nip inside the loos. Unlock the roller towel and take the cloth from inside. Exit and return to Nejo's stall, where you'll find him playing with the ball. Stroke the cat and ring the desk bell on the counter. Grab the broken statuette and use the tissue on the pieces. Talk to Duane and sell him the statuette in exchange for a \$50 bill, then walk back to the club and show Ultar the photograph. Continue the conversation with Ultar until he offers to take George to the Bull's Head hill. Give him the \$50 bill.

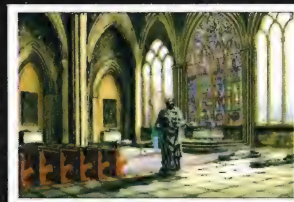
Meet Ultar at the truck

and pass him the roller towel. Pick up the stick from the bush and use it on the cut towel, then use the two on the crack on the cliff edge to climb down. Examine the hole in the rock until you find the ring - take it. Search Klausner's body, look at Baphomet and carefully read the inscription. Don't lie to Khan, and when he offers to let George go in return for his word, agree to shake hands but quickly select the buzzer before during the grace period. While Khan is down on his knees, jump off the cliff.

ACT 7: MONTFAUCON CHURCH

Show the tarnished chalice to the priest, allowing him to clean it off. Examine the right-hand tomb which is set against the rear wall, looking closely to read the biblical markings. Carefully study the scroll in the statue's hand

before using the lens on the scroll. Speak to the Priest once more to recover the chalice, then back at the Museum talk to Lobineau about Baphomet. Head off towards the Baphomet Site on the Paris map.

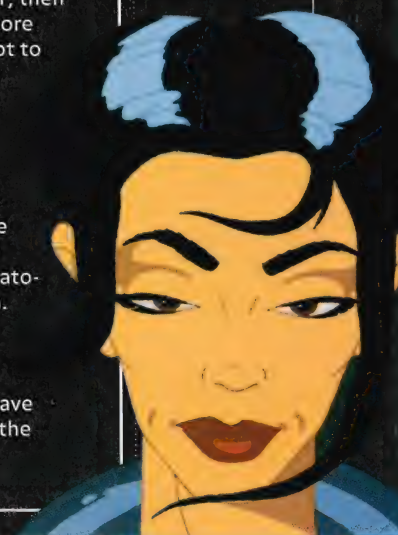
**ACT 8: THE EXCAVATION AT THE INSTITUTE NERVAL**

Go down the steps to the lobby and click on the door on the right - the toilet. Speak to the guard and ask for the keys (the toilet brush icon). Use the keys on the toilet door and pick up the soap from the sink. Use the keys on the soap to get an imprint of the excavation room key, then use the plaster on the soap. Use the soap on the taps to wet the plaster and make a copy of the key. Back outside in the lobby, give the keys back to the guard. Walk outside and try to use the key on the painter's pot. Next, return to the lobby and phone

Nico. Return to the painter and talk to him about the phone. While he's gone dip the plaster key in the painter to make it look real. Return to the lobby and examine the thermostat on the left wall - ask the guard about the thermostat. Click on the thermostat to turn it cold, which will make the guard slip his gloves on. Take the keys from the guard and use the real keys with the painted keys, thus swapping them over. Give the keys back to the guard, who cannot feel the difference through his gloves.

Try to use the excavation

key on the left door, then phone Nico once more and wait for the plot to develop. Return to the lobby and use the key to enter the excavation room on the left. Inside, use the polished chalice on the patch on the lower floor, to see the anatomic projection. This will automatically return you to Nico's apartment, where you'll now have access to Spain on the Europe map.



you buy it.

£3.49 for three evenings





ACT 9: SPAIN

Take the mirror from the utility room before talking to the countess. Leave, and then head of towards the mausoleum and examine the candle. Use the window hook to close the window, then use the tissue on the hook before igniting it with the candles over by the lectern. Light the candle with the burning tissue to get the stone key. Pick up

the bible and give it to the countess, asking her to look up the references. Talk to Lopez about wells, specifically asking how to find them. Pick up the hazel twig from the tree by the utility room window and show it to Lopez.

Take a close look at the lion's head and yank the tooth, and then immediately move away – make sure

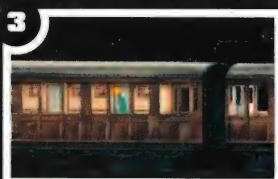
you move quickly though! Examine the exposed wall, then use the mirror on the shaft of light coming down from the well to illuminate the keyhole on the wall. Find the keyhole by touching the secret door once more, then unlock the door using the stone key. After returning to Nico's, leave for the airport and take the next flight to Bannockburn.

ACT 10: TRAIN

Try to leave the compartment, which will trigger a visit from the guard. When he's gone, leave and head left down the corridor. Confront Guido when he pops his head out from behind a compartment door, continue all the way

to the far-left end of the train. After George has reacted to Eklund return to the first compartment. Leave for the second compartment and talk to Georgie. Open the window and climb through it. Up on the roof of the train, walk

along to the right and climb down inside the baggage car. When Guido is thrown from the train yank the brake cord, and then attempt to leave the carriage – you'll be confronted by Nico. After speaking to her, leave the carriage.



ACT 11: SCOTLAND

In the church tower, turn the handle on the wheel mechanism to snap it off. Grab the cog and spindle, then examine the rubble until you eventually find a second cog. Use both of the

cogs on the demon, then use the handle on the demon. Enter the crypt and walk through to the far exit. Inside the Grand Master is hatching his foul plan – stop him in his tracks by throwing

the nearest torch on the gunpowder. Congratulations George, you've defeated the Grand Master and can now return to you're relaxing break in Paris. Phew!



**YOU WILL ATTACK, DESTROY, ESCORT, RESCUE,
DEFEND AND SURVIVE AT ANY COST.**

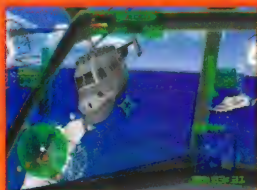
Blast or be blasted!

BLACK DAWN

TM



YOU CAN ALMOST TASTE THE SHRAPNEL!



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NETWORK

Psychologists are

Is you
a cor

VIDEO GAMES

THE TABLOID TRAVESTY

beginning to provide
r little angel
puter killer?



Videogames can kill you. They'll make you **fat, aggressive and stupid.** Concerned parents are queuing up to share shock 'revelations' like these with **the national press.** With the moral backlash stinging his ears, Adam Peters lets the truth get in the way of a good story.



Mr C R Thomas is no expert on the subject of video games. He has no professional grounding in the subject. Nor does he have any professional grounding in the psychology of violence. He's not a psychologist, a doctor, a policeman or a member of the legal profession. Mr C R Thomas is a chartered accountant from Wimbledon. Nevertheless, he succeeded where others failed and found a way to lay the entire

blame for the tragic murder of toddler Jamie Bulger at the feet of the video games industry.

How so, Mr Thomas? "In my view, the real criminals in the case may well be the promoters, distributors and retailers of children's video games. So many of these games depict violence involving shooting, bullying, hitting or pounding small, some would say toddler-like, figures. The games are in danger of becoming role models."



Mr Thomas could only provide one single example of the evil inherent in games... "Last week Channel 4, in a programme called GamesMaster, broadcast a game showing two adults bashing small cartoon moles over the head with mallets for maximum points."

Such statements would be laughable were it not for the lasting tragedy of the murder they attempt to excuse. If this was a drunken bar-room rant, you could probably shrug it off. But it's not. It's an extract from a missive that appeared on the highly respected letters' page of The Times newspaper in November 1993. And it's not the only piece of newsprint that looks for Lucifer in the world of videogames.

PlayStation Plus has scoured the archives of seven national daily newspapers. We discovered that over the past four years there have been more than 400 articles pointing the finger at videogames. Games cause disruption in schools. Games cause obesity. Games cause epileptic fits and hypnotic trances. Games are what murderers use to relax. Games



Nintendo Killed My Son

Games cause obesity. Games are as addictive as **cocaine**. Games lead to **drugs**. Games are **evil**.

The tabloids' opinion on videogames.

lead to children setting fire to each other. Games cause truancy. Games are as addictive as cocaine. Games lead to gambling. Games lead to drugs. Games are evil.

Bullshit. Or is it? There are plenty of teachers' unions, respected psychologists and first-hand accounts out there which suggest that hey, maybe your PlayStation really is a lethal weapon in disguise. We decided to investigate...

Fleet Street is dead, but its spirit lives on in Docklands towers and Thameside breeze blocks. Britain's national press may have moved home, but critics would suggest that their house rules remain the same. Turn a possible danger into a terrifying threat. Invent a folk devil, create a moral panic. In the past it's been hippies with their long hair

Daily Record **SUNDAY mail**

wash. Violent kids terrorise playgrounds. One folk devil has dominated the Nineties more than any other, partly because the actual reason to fear it has changed with the seasons. In 1992 it was making children fat. By the start of 1993 it was giving people epileptic fits. A few months later it was a font of sex and violence. By 1994 it was as addictive as gambling or cocaine. By 1995 it was corrupting Tibetan priests and inspiring child killers. More recently it's been putting people into hypnotic trances.

The cause of all this carnage? videogames, of course. Quite possibly the single greatest evil facing our society. So is there any truth in all this or is it just a load of granny-scaring bullshit designed to sell newspapers to old ladies from Kent? Call Fox Mulder, it's time to open the PSX-files...

Saturday 16th January 1993 was a historic day for videogame press coverage. There in 3-inch high letters on the cover of The Sun (Britain's best-selling daily paper) was the headline 'NINTENDO KILLED MY SON'. The story concerned 14 year old Jasminder Bassi of Orsett, Essex. His parents insisted that he had fallen into a coma and died as a result of playing *Super Mario Brothers* on a Super Nintendo Entertainment System.

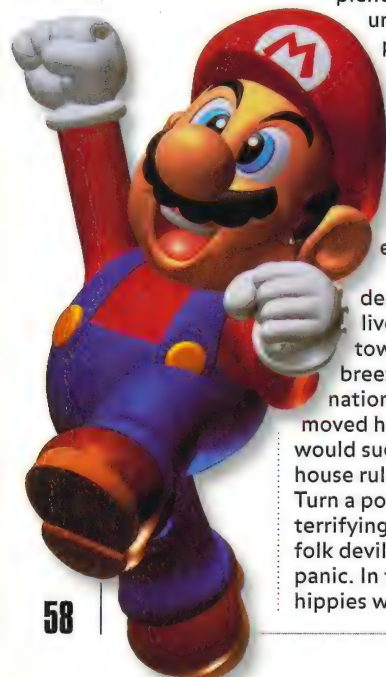
This tragedy came only a week after the Daily Mail had reported two less serious cases. Simon Carde, aged 12, collapsed in front of his Nintendo machine, frothing at the mouth. His parents thought he was having a heart attack. Meanwhile, a 14 year old was admitted into hospital with the same symptoms. Mysteriously, both incidents occurred in the same town - Cardiff. Throughout the early months of 1993 the papers were full of similar stories.

Andrew Lang of Farnham, Surrey was another case. His mother Glynis described the situation to the Evening Standard: "He just fell down on the floor and started frothing at the mouth. We got him to hospital and he was OK but it was terribly distressing for the whole family." The Sun helpfully added a celebrity angle to

the whole scare, with TV personality Michael Aspel admitting: "I'm terrified of the damage videogames may be doing to my two sons."

So how dangerous are games? Tucked far away from the panic-seeking headlines, experts were in agreement that videogames were less likely to trigger epileptic fits than many other forms of entertainment. Dr Richard Grunewald, research fellow at the Institute of Neurology, told The Times that one child in 250 was susceptible to fits from intense flashing lights (eg nightclub strobes), but far fewer would be disturbed by videogames. Terry O'Leary, head of the British Epilepsy Association, added that 'the problem has been blown up out of all proportion.' Mr O'Leary, who suffers from epilepsy himself, happily bought his son a videogame for Christmas.

Consultant neurophysiologist (he must have an extra wide business card) Dr David Fish produced a leaflet on behalf of the National Society for Epilepsy. He pointed out that chances of a seizure being triggered by a game were very small. "One must take a balanced view of this," he told the London Evening Standard. "More than 350,000 people in the UK have active epilepsy. Most people with epilepsy lead a normal life and should





be encouraged to do so."

As facts began to emerge from Japan that at least 121 people there had suffered epileptic fits while playing videogames, the Epilepsy Research Group swung into action. With Government backing, they launched an investigation into the risks associated with videogames. Meanwhile, a TV advert for Pot Noodles was blamed for triggering epileptic fits in three people. This was the first reported case involving a TV advert.

By the middle of December 1993, a Government report on the issue was released to the press. Newspapers sheepishly published the findings: videogames are no more likely to trigger an epileptic fit than watching television. Each year about 30,000 people in Britain have their first epileptic fit. Around 150 of those (0.5%) may be triggered by a videogame, with the same number triggered by television. Only the Daily Mail, the most panic-mongering of daily papers, chose to put a negative slant on things. "videogames can trigger epileptic fits, a Government enquiry has confirmed..." they began, before admitting that "the risk is slight".

Partly as a result of the videogames epilepsy debate that ran throughout 1993, all game hardware and software now carry a warning note, with instructions such as "sit far away from the screen" and "take regular breaks". As the epilepsy threat shrank in the face of an official report, the newspapers were busy discovering other health risks. The Independent reported the case of a 10 year old girl with mild asthma who suffered an acute attack of breathlessness after playing a videogame for 20 minutes. The asthma scare went no further, but by May 1996 the most worrying threat of all had emerged. videogames had started putting people in hypnotic trances.

Virtual Reality Trapped Son in Horror World

At first it was small things. The Independent on Sunday reported back in 1993: "A new toy that allows children to play computer videogames in virtual reality could permanently damage

Video games link with epilepsy to be explored

A NATIONAL survey to investigate the link between computer games and fits in children was announced yesterday, writes Liz Hunt.

The Government-backed study aims to discover how many children with no previous history of epilepsy suffer seizures while playing computer games. The findings will provide guidelines for the public, and could lead to regulatory action against games manufacturers by the Department of Trade and Industry. The Epilepsy Research Group expects to report within a year. Manufacturers have declined to support the study.

About 30,000 cases of epilepsy are diagnosed each year and 1,200 of these — mostly children and young adults — suffer photosensitive epilepsy.

Their fits are triggered by flashing or flickering lights, or geometric patterns or shapes.

Earlier this year, there were reports of children having epileptic fits while playing Sega and Nintendo games. An estimated 6 million homes in Britain have these games.

Booklets with the games warn of a possible link with epilepsy in a minority of people, but manufacturers have proved resistant to putting warnings on packs.

Services for epilepsy are "poor in quality, fragmentary and poorly organised", a Government report has found. The *Epilepsy Needs Document* says many of the 350,000 sufferers are missing out on the best treatment. Unrecorded deaths, page 13

their eyesight." Three years later the threat to eyesight and the dangers of virtual reality had thrown videogames back into the world of big, bold headlines.

It started in May of this year with 10 year old Ashley Bowler and the Daily Mail: "A boy's eyes were left rolling uncontrollably after hours spent playing videogames triggered a neurological disorder. He has now been banned from using his Sega Megadrive system." Doctors discovered that Ashley's eyes were in a spasm from staring too long at the screen. A consultant from the National Hospital for Neurology advised parents not to let their children play for more than an hour a day. Easier said than done.

By September 15th videogames were claiming headlines in several Sunday papers. As the Mail on Sunday were sticking the knife into Sony's advertising (see later), the News of the World reported the case of James Little. The 16 year old from Devon had become hypnotised by a Nintendo arcade racing machine and was convinced that he was a racing driver, burning to death in his wrecked car.

His mother Juliet told the paper: "It started as a family day out. James spent his £2 pocket money on his

ping a steering wheel." The boy was caught in a loop where he kept spinning off the track only for a new game to begin. Dad Roger added: "He really thought he was driving a racing car. His foot kept pumping on the accelerator. We were yelling at him to stop but all he could see was the track."

James was taken to hospital where doctors tried for

"The manufacturers are evil and ought to be punished for promoting the game."

MP Terry Dicks on Sega's Night Trap.

two weeks to pull him out of the trance, using powerful anti-hypnotic drugs and sedatives. In the end they called in a retired local vicar, Rev Fred Pennington, who managed to break the game's hold. Doctors added: "His mind locked into the game and he couldn't switch off. James has cerebral palsy, but this could have happened to any child."

The following week's News of the World triumphantly announced that, as a result of their story, warning signs would be put up at amusement arcades. Bearing in mind the seemingly isolated nature of the incident, what would these signs be warning people about? Epilepsy, of course. Despite the fact that the James Little case

had nothing to do with epilepsy. Without mentioning the report three years earlier that showed videogames to be no more epilepsy-inducing than TV, the News of World listed five cases.

Adam Evans, 12, started having convulsions while playing a Sega tank game in a Staffordshire arcade. The other four cases all involved Nintendo home systems.

Three of them were the original reported cases from 1993. Of course it seems only right that arcades should display the same epilepsy warnings as game packaging, but how a totally unrelated incident could have brought this on is perhaps a testament to the power of the press. We feel this is one issue that will not go away.

Sega Sickener

It was a crappy 1993 Sega Mega-CD game that started the papers talking about game censorship. The only really shocking thing about the tame knickers-and-nooses game *Night Trap* was how dull and boring the bloody thing was. Our friends the Daily Mail found more to get upset about. "The game

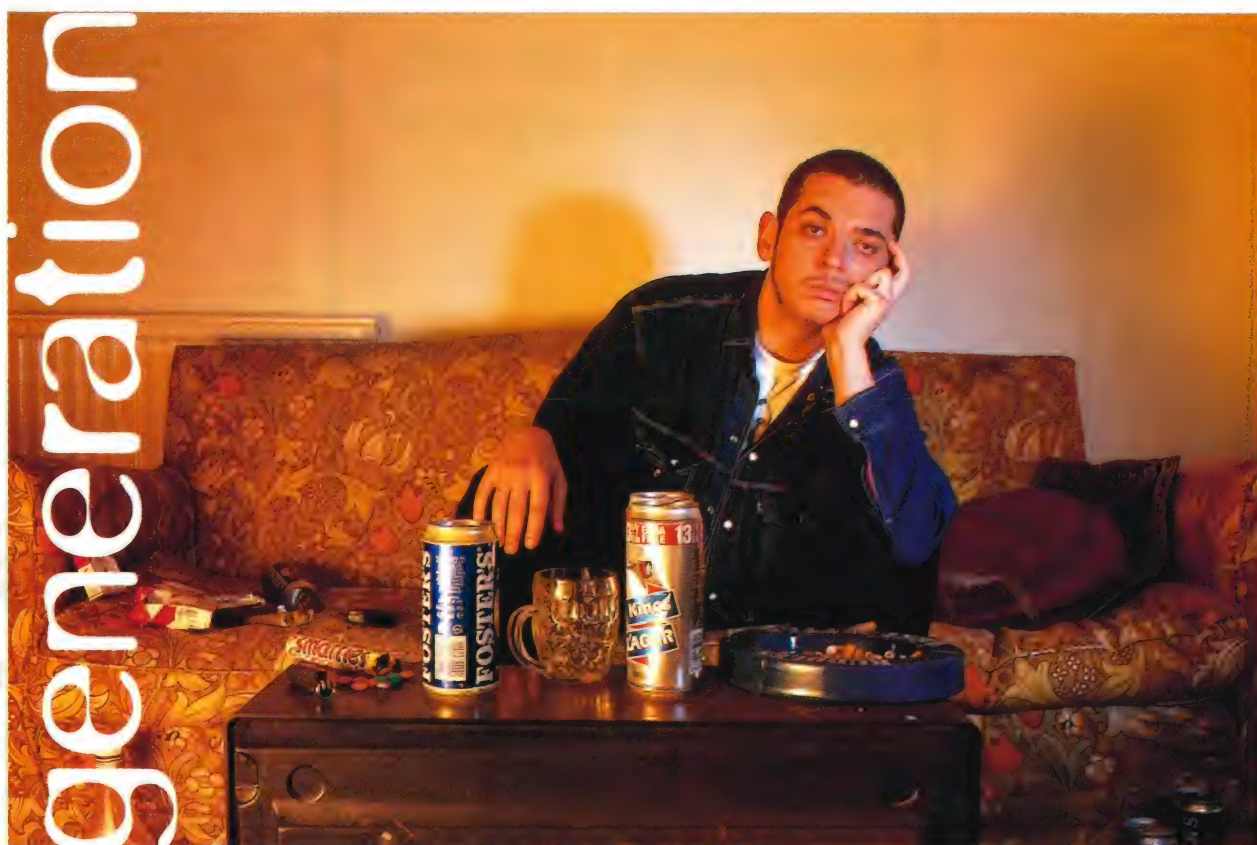


Dr DAVID FISH, ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR EPILEPSY, POINTED OUT THAT THE CHANCES OF A SEIZURE BEING TRIGGERED BY A GAME WERE VERY SMALL.



ACCORDING TO DONALD NAISMITH, PROFESSOR OF NUTRITION AT KING'S COLLEGE, "VIDEOGAMES ARE TURNING MIDDLE CLASS CHILDREN IN 'COMPUTER POTATOES'."

generation



"It's more like an early episode of Doctor Who."

ers of *Night Trap* to within an inch of their lives, is of course a ridiculous one.

Dame Jill Knight took a more restrained view: "This is a new generation of videogames, nastier than ever before. We should consider legislation against such games because they encourage people to maim, mutilate and murder." Valerie Riches from the pressure group Family and Youth Concern added: "This is a symptom of a very sick society. Do not buy this game for your children. It is evil. We also fear such graphic descriptions of violence can, quite literally, blow young people's minds." Indeed.

Of course none of these people had actually seen the game. Sega decided to submit it to the British Board of Film Classification for certifi-

cation. The result was a 15-certificate. The Daily Mail was visibly upset: "Evil Sega game wins backing of censors." James Ferman, director of the BBFC, provided the reasoned view: "It's not gruesome. It's more like an early episode of Dr Who."

One result of Sega's submission to the BBFC was to

BBFC on Night Trap

force the issue of game certification. There was talk of the Government bringing videogames within the framework of the BBFC (in fact the organisation can ban excessively violent or sexual games anyway). In the end the videogames industry elected to police itself and introduce its own certification, the system that remains in place to this day.

Aggression of young computer addicts

But can videogames actually make you violent? Apparently so. Psychologists Dr Mark Griffiths and Nigel Hunt carried out a study of 387 children aged 12 to 16. One in five were found to

Videogames generation is puffed out

Oh, and there's another thing you health-conscious folks out there should be aware of: videogames make you fat. You don't believe us? Just ask Donald Naismith, Professor of Nutrition at King's College. In a letter to The Independent published in September 1992 he claimed this: "Overweight in British schoolchildren has a great deal more to do with the invention of videogames than with the peculiarities of children's food choice."

Every year has seen a new survey or public statement backing up Professor's Naismith's view: "videogames are turning middle class children into 'computer potatoes', says a survey." (Daily Mail, December 1992) "videogames are threatening Britain's sporting future, teachers warned yesterday." (Daily Mirror, July 1993) "Young children who spend too much time playing videogames risk heart disease in later life, health campaigners warn today." (Independent, January 1994) "Evenings, as surveys repeatedly show, are dominated by television and videogames. For many youngsters, it is a couch potato lifestyle." (Daily Mail, November 1995) "Children are becoming flabby slob, boxer Barry McGuigan warns. He said they were being turning into couch potatoes before their teens because they were glued to TV and videogames." (Daily Mirror, July 1996).

Worrying stuff. Cynics would argue that for every survey you find that says one thing, you'll find another that says the exact opposite. And they'd be right. Psychologist Mark Griffiths has probably studied the issue of videogames more than any other academic in Britain. Twelve months ago he told the British Psychological Society conference that his research showed that children who play videogames are likely to be keener on sport. American medical journal *Pediatrics*, meanwhile, blamed television viewing for increasing obesity in children, but added: "videogames do not have the same effect, as children use energy to play." So which side do you believe? And what's wrong with being fat and slobbish anyway?

RELOADED



Are you?... You should be

available on:

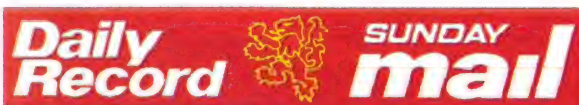


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Bloody disgrace!



So where do PlayStation titles fit into the media's videogames vendetta? Well, the *Resident Evil* 'blood-bath' advert managed to bring out the rent-a-quote mob in force. The Daily Record (26th August 1996) gave us the following great soundbites. From Church of Scotland vicar Bill Wallace "This is so sick. It is up to parents to start campaigning against these evil forces." From our favourite commentator, Valerie Riches of Family and Youth Concern: "The people who produce this material have very sick minds." From Mary Whitehouse: "The advertisers are so unscrupulous."

Entertainingly, Sony (who condemned Virgin's advertising in this very magazine two months ago) have run into their own problems. Their current campaign of press ads, which they felt were "creative without being shocking," elicited this response from (you guessed it) the Daily Mail: "Ban the 'mad' Sony ads." However, the paper's best quote came from MP David Atkinson: "This is as bad as the Benetton adverts which used an AIDS victim to sell clothes."

Anna Lubenska, of the National Voluntary Council for Children's Play, contributes this to the debate: "Advertisements for videogames show video characters being stabbed to death or being eaten by a dragon. This surely is unsafe practice." The knives are clearly out in an age when even Princess Diana publicly blames videogames (rather than, say, divorce) for the breakdown of family values.



be addicted to the games, with 20% of those admitting to aggressive behaviour as a direct result of their playing.

In Gloucestershire a head teacher barred handheld videogames from his school, claiming that they encouraged playground violence with children imitating the aggressive acts on screen. We presume he wasn't referring to *Tetris*. Meanwhile, in another school in Gloucestershire (the county

Gloucestershire police blamed videogames when the latest craze to sweep over nine-year-olds was building home-made flamethrowers.

that gave us Fred West and the flesh-eating bug) children as young as nine were making flame-throwers. A particularly badly judged metalwork project? No, apparently this was "part of the latest school craze that police believe may be inspired by violent videogames."

Meanwhile, over in Bosnia the Sunday Times was chatting to Cent, a 28 year old Muslim soldier. Cent was in command of an American anti-tank weapon. He got a direct hit with his first shot. "I didn't get much training, but I've always been good at videogames," he explained. Back in Blighty, it seemed as if every violent crime was somehow connected to videogames. Detective Inspector Tim Wilson spoke of a young thug who earned £50,000 a year from crime. "He spends it on takeaway food, videogames and drugs," added the copper, helpfully.

The two boys who killed

toddler Jamie Bulger "played videogames while they awaited trial." In January of this year the Evening Standard told us about a brutal father who tortured his two year old son for six hours then "played videogames to relax." So too did Learco Chindamo, the 16 year old who murdered headmaster Philip Lawrence. "While his mother was at church, Learco and his brothers stayed at home playing martial arts videogames," the Daily Mail informed us symbolically.

Away from the more violent crimes, the airport worker who stole the Duchess of York's diamond necklace from New York's JFK airport hid it in a Nintendo game box. His sister told the Sun: "He's never had a girlfriend. The most interesting thing in his life is videogames." Most recently, the Daily Star has brought us two middle-aged women exchanging punches as they fought over a Nintendo games system at a car boot sale in Bristol.

The interpretation is easily made: violent criminals like videogames, so videogames must breed violent criminals. Keith Hellawell, Chief

**CHIEF
CONSTABLE
KEITH
HELLAWELL
RECKONS THAT
IN TEN YEARS,
90% OF CHILDREN
WOULD
BE TAKING
DRUGS, INCITING
VIDEO-GAMES AS ONE
OF THE MAIN
CAUSES.**

Constable of West Yorkshire Police, announced on television in November 1995 that with ten years 90% of British children would be dealing or taking drugs. Partly because of the pro-drugs messages they receive from the media, their peers... and, of course, from videogames. Next month in Solved we show you how to access the secret Smackhouse level in Crash Bandicoot.

Feminist academic Marina Warner, meanwhile, delivered a lecture on Radio 4 that focused on the 'male world' of videogames: "In the games mythical monsters are shot and blasted, hacked and slashed, one by one... nobody sits down to learn to talk, as Frankenstein's creature does so poignantly in Mary Shelley's book." OK, so if there were



more games based on learning to talk, would there be less violence? Not according to those who believe the link between games and aggression is a load of, to use a 'male world' term, bollocks. In 1994 the Policy Studies Institute compared the viewing habits of young offenders with those of 'ordinary' children. Both groups preferred soap operas to violent TV show. Both cited *Streetfighter 2* as their favourite videogame.

In 1995 a psychologist at Aston University published research that showed children found violence on the TV news more upsetting than violence in films or games. 37% had been upset by film violence, only 7% by game violence. Some might argue this indicates that children are desensitised to animated (eg videogame) aggression. Psychologists from Middlesex University, meanwhile, came to this conclusion: "Children who had long exposure to computer games and played them frequently reported lower aggression than those who played less. We do not have an explanation for this." Psychologists without an explanation for something? Hurrah!

the Moron
Makers

Back in 1994 Britain's Education Secretary John Patten told the Overseas Women's Club in London that "classic writers like Robert Louis Stephenson and Charles Dickens should take the place of Mr Blobby and computer game hero Super Mario." The Professional Association of Teachers, Britain's fourth largest teaching union, agrees. While other unions cite important issues like disruptive pupils, low pay and the national curriculum as their main worry, the PAT continues to list its main concern as "the negative effect of television and videogames."

"Videogames provide a buzz that could cause addiction." Sociologist Mark Griffiths

Dr Sue Fisher, a sociologist at Plymouth University, has claimed that children risk getting addicted to videogames, playing truant and stealing to fund their habit. Her research showed evidence that videogames are "as addictive as gambling". Mark Griffiths, mean-while, dis-

covered that one in four children neglected their homework to play games instead:

"Videogames provide a buzz and a series of psychological hooks. They are components that could cause addiction."

Videogames naturally disputed this, but the most original interpretation comes from controversial writer A N Wilson in a 1993 Evening Standard opinion piece: "I am surprised that so many children do tear themselves away from their addictive videogames in order to turn up at school and be taught the sort of soppy, half-baked things which modern teachers like to talk about." Wilson's solution, which he proposed in all seriousness, was to end compulsory schooling in Britain for children aged 8 or over. Well that's a thought.

thee behind
Nintendo

It's not all doom and gloom, though. In the medical world, reports also cite the use of videogames to treat dizziness, recovery from chemotherapy, and physiotherapy for arm injuries. In the world of religion, a company called Alive Software has released Christian videogames. In *Spiritual Warfare*, you must turn the other cheek when attacked



NETWORK

Psychologists are beginning to provide worrying data about children's addiction to

Is your little angel a computer killer?

He said the colour attracted him at first, then he had strong compulsion to beat the wire. He didn't want anything to come between him and his work. He was nervous and in a while even started smoking a pipe until he managed to

per cent were playing for at least 30 hours a week. These, he says, could be described as addicts. "Whether the games are inherently good or bad is not the pertinent question here," says Dr Griffiths. "The question should be asking is what the effect of any activity that takes up 30 hours of leisure time a week has on the educational and social development of children and adolescents."

video games playing. Perhaps the most troubling statistic, though, was that one in five of the children said that he believed they had become more aggressive after playing violent games. There was a high correlation between this self-reporting increased violence and those said to be affected by Dr. Gidycz's study.

There is much controversy over the impact of violent video games on children, and the American Psychological Association has been divided for years by South by Sea-

computer games are aimed entirely at killing, but death is not related to pain or suffering. Now is a time, as players have several lives. Of course, this is not as true of violent movies, which are not intended to kill, but the difference with video games is that they teach aggressive children in violent acts.

Mr. Sautz is worried by the children's lack of involvement in the killing and the extent to which this is glorified with him.

Children under eight often imitate violent behaviour, such as martial arts moves

video game addiction are hard to measure. In Dr Griffiths' study, 1.5 per cent of children confessed to stealing money to buy expensive cartridges. 2.7 per cent of them played violent games.

it is severe. She has interviewed 500 children, mainly aged between eight and 12. When asked about their favourite games, she says, none could remember any story line at all. All they could say was, you gotta kick 'em, you gotta punch 'em, you gotta kill 'em. Most

console-bashing there's been not one definite case of someone driven by a videogame to commit a murder. In Spain, young people moved away from videogames in 1994 as the

In the medical world, reports cite the use of **videogames** to treat dizziness and recovery from **chemotherapy**.

by muggers. Failing that, you can throw pomegranates at them. In another game, *Save the Baby Moses*, you, er, save the Baby Moses.

Over in the mafia heartland of Palermo, Sicily, Father Paolo Turtorro lures youngsters into church with videogames to show them that there is more to life than the mafia, which many of them would otherwise go on to join. Using game violence to prevent real violence – work that

Less encouraging is the case of Osel Torres, upon whom the Keanu Reeves film *Little Buddha* was based. When Osel was only 18 months the Dalai Lama decreed him to be the reincarnation of lama Thubten Yeshe, the guy who invented flower power in the 1960s. His Spanish mother believed he was being indoctrinated too much in Tibet, so she took him back to Spain when he was ten. There became addicted to videogames, so she had to send him back to his father. Tibet's future spiritual leader almost won over by the cult of videogames.

Finally, we should point out that amidst all this media

craze of fantasy adventure board games took over. One night a 20 year old chemistry student and a 17 year old college student murdered a 52 year old street sweeper. The murder was committed within the 'rules' of the board game Killers. A written account found at one of the murderers' homes shows that the duo were living out their roles from the fantasy game.

The moral of all this is clear. If psychologists, teachers and rent-a-quote MPs really want to make Britain's streets safe, they should leave the PlayStation alone and ban Cluedo instead. I'm just off to the study with Colonel Mustard, can anyone lend me a candlestick?



What the People Say



ALAN WELLSMAN,
HEAD OF PR,
SONY COMPUTER
ENTERTAINMENT

Does the PlayStation cause epileptic fits?

"Any form of flickering light can trigger epilepsy. If you're prone to epilepsy many things can trigger it, whether it's the PlayStation, a cinema or a nightclub. We put warnings in every single hardware and software box and advise people not to spend too long on the machine. As for hypnotic trances, I'm not sure of the genuineness of that story. It may well be hype, but we take issues like this very seriously. If there was a rash of epilepsy incidents associated with our machine, we'd investigate. We have

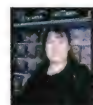
vide memory cards so people can play for a while, save their position, do their homework, then return to the game later. videogames are always scapegoated. Newspapers want sensational copy. It sells papers, that's why they do it."



SUE FISHER,
SOCIOLOGIST,
UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH

"Platform games are addictive. My studies used the same criteria used to test people's addiction to gambling. The technology of arcade games and gambling machines is the same, and people respond to them in the same way. While I was giving a paper at a gambling

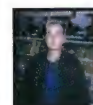
"I get angry sometimes when I'm playing a game, but overall games are just enjoyment. Watching them does sometimes do my eyes in - things are too quick - but I'm not worried about medical problems. I don't agree that games make you fat. I play football a lot. Playing on a computer just doesn't compare to playing sport for real."



NERYS MATTHEWS,
BOUGHT
PLAYSTATION A WEEK
AGO. FAVE GAMES:

PINBALL SIMULATORS

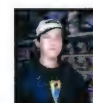
"I can't say I've become more violent in the past week. Some games are pretty vicious, but I guess it depends on how you are as a person. I suppose people could become couch potatoes if they stayed in playing games all the time. There's always been kids who just sit in front of the TV. As for epilepsy, I know they suggest you take a 15 minute break every hour. That's good from a medical point of view. The same is true of any activity that requires a lot of concentration. I work in the medical profession and I always take regular breaks while playing, but I know people who don't."



JAMES MITCHELL,
BOUGHT
PLAYSTATION ON ITS
LAUNCH. FAVE GAME:

FORMULA 1

"I don't think games are addictive. I could happily give up my PlayStation if I had to. Medical issues don't worry me. I know there's a link between flashing lights and epilepsy, but I don't think any direct link with the PlayStation has been proved yet. I'm not worried anyway, I don't play it that much."

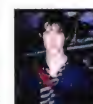


OLIVER MILES,
BOUGHT
PLAYSTATION FOUR
MONTHS AGO. FAVE

GAME: TEKKEN 2

"I don't follow the guidelines about taking breaks. I usually play on the machine for sev-

eral hours at a time and I've never experienced any side effects."



SIMON CRAGG,
BUYING A
PLAYSTATION SOON

"Are games dangerous? It depends how far you want to take it. videogames are an accessory to real life, not a substitute for going out and interacting with other people. For a lot of people games are an escape. If you've got an addictive personality, you're going to get addicted to something, whether it's games, gambling, drink or drugs. As for violence, it's a state of mind. You can play a game and just enjoy it. I don't try to rip people's spines out after playing *Mortal Kombat*. The majority of people are mentally stable enough to play a game without needing to reenact events in real life. I'm rather sceptical about the medical issues as well. You can probably say that nightclubs cause epileptic fits. People can probably be put into hypnotic trances by hypnotic music like trance-techno. When something is in the public eye, authority figures will try to blame it for all the wrongs in society. A lot of authority figures just don't understand videogames, which makes them an easy thing to use as a scapegoat."

THANKS TO ELECTRONICS BOUTIQUE IN BRIGHTON FOR LETTING US HARASS THEIR CUSTOMERS.

Write to reply

Have you ever suffered a negative side-effect of any kind as a result of playing on your PlayStation? If so, we'd like to hear from you. Write to us at this address: Game Over, PlayStation Plus, EMAP Images, 30-32 Farrington Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Are videogames really as dangerous as the press make out? We took to the telephone lines and shopping malls of Britain to garner some opinions...

the interests of the consumer at heart. The last thing you want to do is trigger epilepsy in your customers."

Does the PlayStation make you violent?

"There is no evidence to suggest that. You could say that Pulp Fiction causes violence, but again there's no evidence. Even the link between the Child's Play film and the Jamie Bulger case was never proved. We'd like to see a big, definitive study. At the moment people just seem to research the issue in favour of their own views."

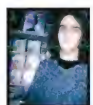
Does the PlayStation make you fat?

"No, that's bollocks. Mark Griffiths from Plymouth [now Nottingham Trent] University found that people who played games were more sporty."

Does the PlayStation make you stupid?

"If you're stupid you're stupid. It's someone's own decision if they put off doing homework to play games. We can't stop them. We do pro-

conference in Las Vegas, I spoke to a compulsive gambler who had kicked his habit only to get hooked on videogames. Most children I've studied who are addicted to fruit machines have a co-addiction to videogames. The machines are usually placed side to side. Addiction involves chasing a high score, wanting to complete the game. Achievement creates a state of arousal and violence heightens the arousal. Some children are definitely vulnerable to both addiction and anti-social behaviour. As technology advances, with the use of virtual reality becoming more widespread, the threat is likely to increase. The more sophisticated games become, the more the problems need to be aired. Kids need to be protected."



BRETT BUTLER,
BOUGHT PLAYSTATION
THREE MONTHS AGO.
FAVE GAME: RESIDENT

EVIL

EVERY NIGHT IT'S THE
SAME ROUTINE.



EVERY NIGHT, BEFORE I GO TO BED, I PUT
OXY MEDICATED CREAM ON MY FACE.
IT WORKS WHILE I SLEEP, UNBLOCKING MY
PORES. AND BECAUSE I USE IT EVERY NIGHT
IT KEEPS THEM CLEAR, **HELPING TO PREVENT
SPOTS AND BLACKHEADS.** OK, SO I'M A ROUTINE
FREAK. BUT I'M NOT A SPOTTY ROUTINE FREAK.

SPOTS? OXYCUTE 'EM WITH OXY 10!

OXY 10 TREATMENT FOR SPOTS CONTAINS BENZOYL PEROXIDE. ALWAYS READ THE LABEL. OXY AND OXYCUTE 'EM! ARE TRADE MARKS.





**AVAILABLE
NOVEMBER '96**



ALSO AVAILABLE



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TOMB RAIDER™

featuring LARA CROFT

"...a game engine that blows Delphine's Fade to Black, even ID's Quake out of the water."

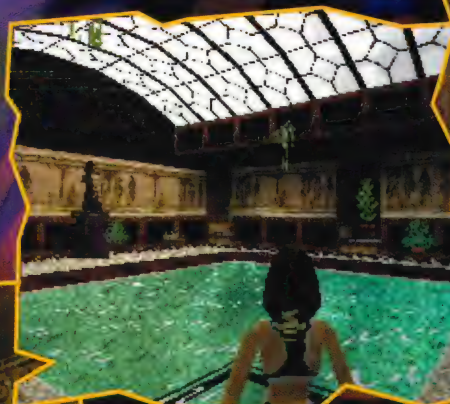
Mean Machines 94%

"...Tomb Raider could be the game to unlock the power of PlayStation; we could be looking at the proverbial boundaries that everyone talks of pushing, if not breaking."

Official PlayStation Magazine

"It's going to wipe the rabid froth from Resident Evil's lips and then kick it into touch!"

Play Magazine



EIDOS
INTERACTIVE



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ALTHOUGH FIFA '97 LOOKS FAR BETTER THAN ITS COMPETITORS, IT NEITHER PLAYS AS WELL OR IS AS ENJOYABLE AS THE LIKES OF OLYMPIC SOCCER AND ACTUA SOCCER.



here's something indefinable about soccer that makes it seemingly impossible to recreate on a video game system. Even the pinnacle of PlayStation soccer games — US Gold's eminently playable *Olympic Soccer* — can hardly be considered a realistic take on the beautiful game. Soccer is quite simply an instinctive sport, and no matter how many moves are added to each game there always seems to be a fail-safe method of scoring which would have sunk the Premiership years ago if the same was applicable in the real thing. After all, you don't see Robbie Fowler waiting at the edge of the penalty area to drive in a diagonal shot that the 'keeper has no hope of saving, or even the entire Spurs squad pushing up field leaving nobody in defence or in formation. Football is a blend of tactics and individual skill, and while *Adidas Power Soccer*, *Actua*, and *FIFA '96* are all fine games with individual skills, as far as recreating the variety of soccer goes, they are — to quote *Olympic Soccer's* Alan Green:

Release : NOVEMBER '96
Company : EA
Price : £44.95
Players : 1-4
Genre : SPORTS SIM

'woeful.' A great deal of the problems lie in the fact that software houses feel obliged to push the PlayStation's graphical capabilities as far as possible within the realms of motion-capture or rendered sprites, yet somehow forget the little quirks and skills that make a game both realistic yet playable. We've said it countless times before: games are not bought solely on the quality of their graphics — and football games are probably the greatest example of this.

CLOSE INSPECTION
The attention to detail within *FIFA '97* is bordering on the obsessive. In a trip to the game's development HQ in Vancouver, *PlayStation Plus* was privy to the development of the game, and thus have seen first hand the little touches such as motion-blending and inter-woven moves the programmers were

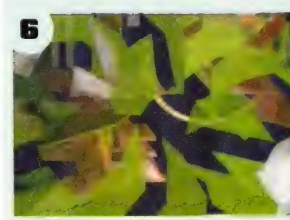
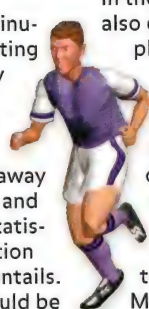
slaving away at. The minutia the team were creating covered virtually every aspect of the sport, with players suffering from injuries, wore the correct home and away kits where applicable, and all bore the relevant statistics and team information that a deal with FIFA entails. By rights, *FIFA '97* should be the greatest football game to date. If only. Yes, *FIFA '97* is the most comprehensive of all those available, and yes it also features the best motion-capture of any game — football or otherwise. However, all these technical achievements mean bugger all if, at the end of the day, the game isn't all it could be.

First things first, *FIFA '97* is most certainly a candidate for the most comprehensive sports sim to grace any machine. As soon as the game has loaded, international teams from all around the globe are on offer

(including the creme-de-la-creme sides masquerading under the 'All-Stars' banners), while a secondary menu also allows the user to select from one of the leading sides from each country's premier league. EA's long-term deal with FIFA gives them access to statistics and ranking for all the sides included in the game, and the deal also extends to using all the players' names, thus doing away with nonsense pseudonyms like Gillian Ducks and Des Fardinand. Due to the complex toing and froing with a game such as *FIFA '97*, there are some strange anomalies in the team listings, with Middlesbrough missing



FIFA '97

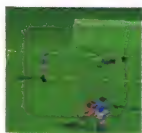




Ravanelli and Emerson, while Alan Shearer is still clad in a Blackburn Rovers shirt (while Kevin Keegan's Newcastle United bank account is probably £15 million in the black), but this can be attributed to the sound side of the game wherein all the teams and listings were accurate as of last April, when Motty and Andy Gray went into the studio to record their commentary.

HEALTHY OPTIONS

Options is one thing *FIFA '97* has stacks of, and every aspect of the game can be altered in some way. The length of a match can be altered, an indoor pitch has been added, and all the usual league and cup tournaments are present. Strangely, though, as opposed to offering a 'proper' Premiership or Serie A table with 22 teams battling it out and three points awarded for a win as usual, a World Cup-esque 'Group' system is preferred with the sides split into groups of six, and left to battle it out for a place in the top two of their mini-league. Considering the FIFA license, it seems a trifle odd that such a system has been used, and would certainly make for a more logical conclusion to a number of games than yet another series of knock-out rounds akin to the cup tournaments also in the game. There is also a 'transfer' system which allows the player to add any of the players on offer to their team, with



Motty and Andy Gray duly recounting the on-field antics of Steve McManaman in a Spurs shirt, or Baggio alongside Vinnie Jones at Wimbledon. One thing to note, however, when dabbling with the transfer market is that if, say, West Ham buy Robbie Fowler and bung him in midfield replacing Tony Cottee (a fair swap if ever I heard one!), after every game Fowler will resort to his natural striker position, and thus ruin the formation of the squad unless his is repositioned.

In addition to the many gameplay possibilities afforded to the player before a match, a secondary menu can be summoned by pausing the game, whereupon formation changes can be made, the team pushed forward into a more offensive line, or replays of the last thirty seconds of play can be reviewed over and over. All of these options, however, are little



FIFA TOURNAMENT				
Schedule				
Group A				
Date	Home	Visitor	Score	
Jun 1	Belgium	Brazil	4-3	
Jun 1	Scotland	Costa Rica	4-2	
Jun 5	Costa Rica	Belgium	0-1	
Jun 5	Brazil	Scotland		
Jun 9	Costa Rica	Brazil		
Jun 9	Belgium	Scotland		

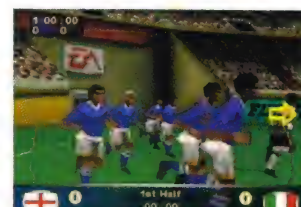
more than a handful of bonuses, and let's face it, you buy a football game in order to experience the delights of the beautiful game. This is where things start to go horribly wrong...

GETTING STARTED

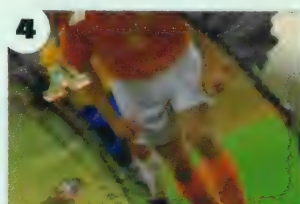
Things get off to a very good start indeed. Having selected your teams from those on offer (with the CPU comparing stats regarding their passing, goal keeping and shooting abilities as the game loads), the user-friendly nature of the game is again revealed as three control systems are offered. Beginner is the obvious choice the *FIFA '97* novice, and allows the player a modicum of control, but ensures that passes and crosses are perfectly weighted and positioned. In other words, the Beginner mode is pretty much identical to the



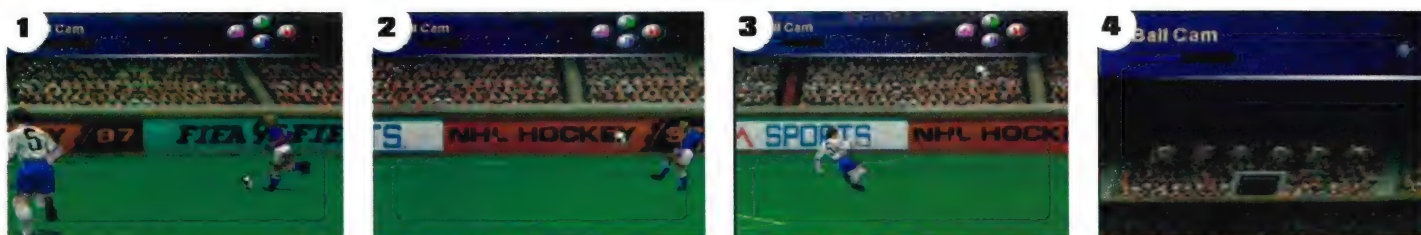
(ABOVE) IF IT'S TOO COLD FOR A GAME OF 11-A-SIDE FOOTBALL, SELECT THE INDOOR GAME FOR A QUICK KICK-ABOUT.



control method in Probe's flawed *FIFA '96* conversion, and thus suffers from the same problems that plagued that installment — ie. it never really feels as if you are in full control of every tackle and shot. The Semi-Pro mode is much better in that the length of passes and strength of shots are now determined by the length which the player keeps the relevant button depressed, while to avoid getting over complex the positioning of the shots is still governed by the CPU. Finally, the Pro mode is just that — every aspect of play is at your disposal. All the overhead kicks and diving headers within the game are at your disposal, and anyone planning to nod in a swooping pass from one of their wingers had better make sure they A) position the



(1-10) THE INTRODUCTION SEQUENCE FOR *FIFA '97* IS PRETTY COOL, WITH RENDERED IMAGES INTERSPERSED LIVE ACTION VIDEO. IT'S A SHAME THE GAME ITSELF ISN'T QUITE SO GOOD.



(1-8) THIS REALLY IS LIQUID FOOTBALL. RUNNING THE BALL ALONG THE WING, IT'S CROSSED INTO THE CENTRE AND FINALLY HEADED INTO THE BACK OF THE NET. SCORCHIO!

pass perfectly, and B) time the header to meet it first time. Either that or slide embarrassingly into the back of the net while the ball goes off for a goal kick. Control over the players is effected through combinations of the facia buttons. Passing, kicking, lobs, and tackling are all pieced together



SAFE HANDS

FIFA '97's ARTIFICIALLY INTELLIGENT GOALKEEPERS NOW MAKE IT HARDER TO SCORE CHEESY GOALS. THANKFULLY NOW THERE'S NO MORE BOOTING THE BALL AT A 45° ANGLE IN THE HOPE OF GETTING ONE IN THE BACK OF THE NET.

One of the areas where soccer games invariably fall down is regarding the goalkeeper AI. *GoalStorm*, *Actua*, and even dearest *Olympic Soccer* all fall foul of the classic 45 degree shot, while the most frequent way to score in *Adidas* is to slam it at the 'keeper and then knock in the rebound. To its credit, though, *FIFA '97* manages to evade some of the dafter scoring methods other fail to stop. The 'keeper AI is clever enough to bring them off their line to close down angle, back track to counter lobbed shots, and even pull off lightning dives to prevent long-range volleys. With all the FIFA-endorsed teams within the game, it is the goalies that separate the Liverpools from the Kuala Lumpur XI with the smaller sides' 'keepers noticeably weaker than the top flight. As such as the game progresses and the player gets braver in who they challenge, new methods must be found to get past the likes of Schmeichel and Seaman. Strangely, though, the game often begins a match with the number two 'keeper in the starting line up, with Nigel Spink replacing Mark Bosnich for Villa and Les Sealey usurping West Ham's regular Ludek Mikulowski for some unknown reason.

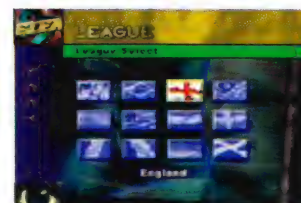


er using the X, circle and triangle buttons, with the required move instigated by the CPU depending on the ball's trajectory and position in relation to the sprite and the way the player is facing. The act of shooting has also been refined, and the player now keeps the shot button depressed to power up the shot, while using the Dpad to position where they want to place the ball. Initially, this system seems a little unwieldy and the majority of a novice *FIFA '97* player's kicks will worry the corner flag more than the goalies, but after a while practice makes perfect and it is possible to place low shots in the corner of the net or slam it into the top-left corner. Other combinations of shots — the much-touted bicycle kicks, diving headers, and volleys — are effected using combinations of the two, with the players leaping in the air for headers, or chesting the ball to bring it down for a volley. A lot has been made of EA's new motion-

blending system which is supposed to allow for realistic motion-captured sprites which flow in to each new move without a delay between the two. While the system does seem to make a slight difference, the majori-

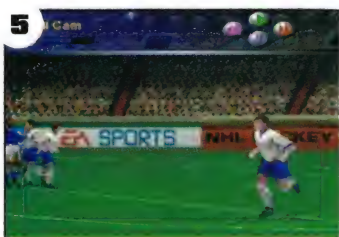


ty of the obvious hard work that has gone into the system is lost because the best view to use when playing the game is the default camera which generally pans out from the action for a better overview of the action. As such, as the tiny — but admittedly correctly-coloured — sprites pass and lob the ball, it's hard to tell if the motion-blending is working because



everything is so small! Switching to one of the other views (Ball Cam, Side Cam, Goal Cam, etc, all of which will be familiar to 32bit FIFA veterans) enhances the detail but has the downside of making the game incredibly hard to play. The detail on each of the players is worth a special mention here, and the graphics team have really done the business as far as the players go. Each player now sports a face, and the polygon basis for each sprite also means that creased shirts and light-sourced detail also add to the realism. That said, however, when the game is viewed up close via the Ball Cam, the motion-blending system does come to the fore, and frankly it isn't all it's cracked up to be. Yes, the players can pass and head the ball in all directions or turn and run with the ball (all in glorious close-up), but the animation is only moderately more impressive than that of the sprites in *FIFA '96*, and cer-





tainly not the huge step in technology we were told to expect.

LEAGUE STRUGGLES

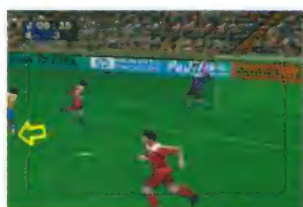
With all the promised realism the motion-blending was supposed to bring, the actual *FIFA '97* gameplay comes as a real disappointment. With EA promising a game that would exploit the weaknesses of others within the genre, and combine arcade playability with all the tricks and tactics associated with the sport, it's with great sadness



in the preference for detail over pace, the tail is wagging the dog, and it should never be that way.

MATCH FIT?

The lack of speed in *FIFA '97* is just so frustrating as it could have been so good. The potential is most certainly there, and the product shines through the constant polishing bestowed upon it. Take, for example, the commentary. Never before has a game sounded as good as this. With *FIFA '97* veteran John Motson now joined by Sky's Andy Gray (who has already done the deed for Warner's *Striker '96*), and — in a real coup — Des Lynam. As the game loads, Des welcomes us all the Virtual Stadium, sets the scene, and hands us over to Motty ▶▶

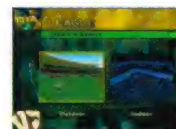
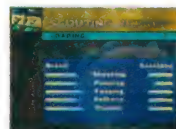
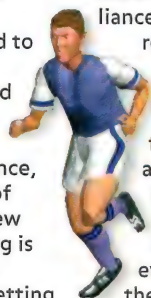


that *FIFA '97* is revealed to be another 'kick and run' effort. The greatest PlayStation footie game to date, the simple but addictive *Olympic Soccer*, relies on its speed and simple but effective control system to win people over. In opting for detail, *FIFA '97* becomes bogged down and never really flows as a real soccer game does. Passing is fine, and shooting comes with practice, but as far as tackling goes the game is still as imprecise as the '96 edition. Yes, all the promised headers are there, but frankly they too are far too random to worth praise. Granted the three play modes will allow the game to grow on the user, but there's one over-riding factor that is set to stop people getting to grips with the action: the speed. With its many light-sourced sprites and the impressive Virtual Stadium something had to go somewhere. The PlayStation is renowned for its processing speed when loads of things are running at once, and *FIFA '97* falls foul of one of the machine's few limitations — everything is just soooooo sloooooow. There's no chance of getting

to grips with the crosses and fancy moves practice inevitably brings, because if you're not tackled first then the sluggish controls over the player in question make things harder than they should be. Football games should be instinctive, and it seems as if marrying complete control with detailed aesthetics are just impossible at the moment. On the current brace of consoles, anyway.

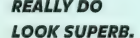
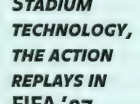
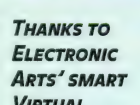
In battling to create the most comprehensive football game yet, EA have forgotten the most important aspect of all. It must play well. Yes, we'd all love a game which allows us to turn the tricks pros do on Match of the Day every week, but not if they are at the expense of speed. Everything in *FIFA '97* is polished to perfection, and there are moments of brilliance where the sprites

react superbly to a ball and it's hard not to be impressed. However, these moments are too few and far between, and the sluggish pace pales terribly next to the fast-paced offerings of US Gold and even *Sensible Soccer* for the Amiga. It seems that

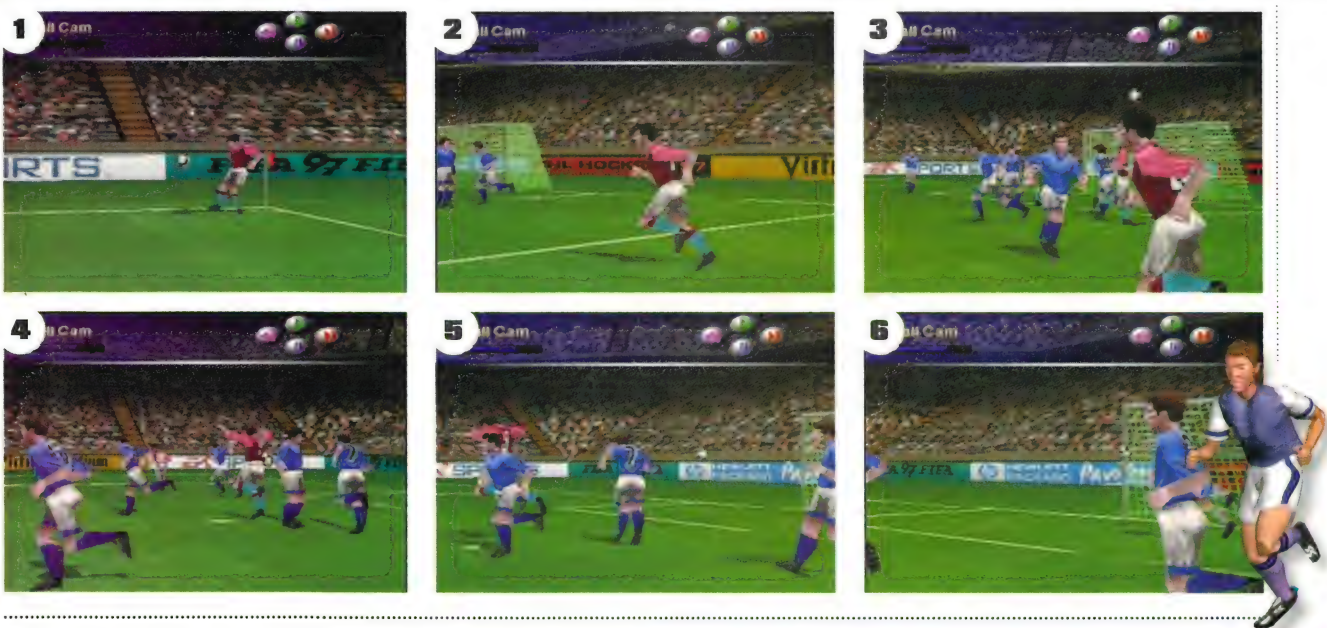


LET'S SEE THAT AGAIN...

Following a goal, the CPU automatically instigates an action replay. A fault of *FIFA '96* was that the replay could only be seen from the same camera the game used. As such, if a close up was required it could only be effected using the Ball Cam angle — which made scoring a goal virtually impossible in itself! Thankfully, *FIFA '97* has an intelligent camera system which replays the goals from the best possible angle. If, for example, the ball was volleyed in from thirty yards, the camera will use a distant view to emphasise the strength of the shot, while tap-ins or headers are zoomed in on, and consequently look more impressive. It is also possible to rewind and replay the shot over and over again if you so desire. In fact, all that's missing is Andy Gray's light pen to highlight people in or out of position. But then that's no great loss, is it?



THANKS TO ELECTRONIC ARTS' SMART VIRTUAL STADIUM TECHNOLOGY, THE ACTION REPLAYS IN FIFA '97 REALLY DO LOOK SUPERB.



(1-6) AS YOU CAN SEE, THE REPLAY OPTIONS IN FIFA '97 ARE EXTENSIVE, WITH NUMEROUS CAMERA ANGLES FROM WHICH TO VIEW THE GAME.

and Andy. It is when Motty and Gray get together that things really kick off, though. Both are on hand with comments for every move within the game, with the CD streamed almost perfectly to avoid the delay between action and speech. Motty covers every pass, listing not only the player's name (no mean feat with all those teams on offer), while Gray as ever enlightens us with constructive criticism and acerbic comments. The commentary is absolutely breathtaking at times, and all credit must go to the EA sound

HE STEPS UP TO TAKE IT

Taking a penalty is a rather vague affair in *FIFA '97*. The view used is directly behind the penalty taker, and the low perspective means that it looks as if he is standing inches away from the goal keeper. Similarly, due to the seemingly short distance between the two, judging the shot angle is incredibly difficult, while saving is made harder thanks to the shorter response time the angle gives. So once again, we are still to see a penalty system that works.



team for creating a genuine atmosphere akin to that of watching a game on TV. The number of samples used is very impressive, and even when the same passing moves are used (sadly all-too-frequently thanks to the sluggish controls) the speech manages to stay varied — with only some of Andy Gray's comments becoming rather familiar.

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

FIFA '97 was a very brave exercise and can probably be regarded as a step in the right direction. The programmers have managed to conquer a number of problems associated with past footie games, and the sprites are of a very high quality with passable animation. The goalkeepers are far better than those of any other game in the genre (see box), and the aforementioned

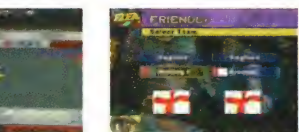


tioned speech and moments of skill prove that somewhere in there is a stunning game trying to get out. In ignoring the speed issue, though, EA have made a serious defensive blunder, and consequently killed off any chance *FIFA '97* had of topping the table. While I appreciate that they wanted to cram as much as possible into the game, somewhere along the line they have forgotten what makes a playable football game. *Olympic Soccer* may not be as realistic as this, but

Opinion *FIFA '97* had all the promise to be the greatest football game to date. It has attractive graphics, plentiful moves, and goal keepers that are the most intelligent we've seen. However, all the good points are lost because *FIFA '97* has sacrificed its speed for detail. This is a major faux pas, as football games have to be fast. There's no point legging it down the wing if the player appears to be strolling, and the slow play also affects the controls, making tackling imprecise and headers unwieldy. While there is a very good basis for a football game here, EA needs to address the speed issue if the FIFA brand is going to live up to its potential. **SM**

TRANSFERS			
BRAZIL	Name	Pos	Overall
America	Carlos A	D	78
	Clair S	D	76
	Lopes M	D	78
BRAZIL	Name	Pos	Overall
America	Pachola N	D	81
	Carlinhos B	M	81
	Gilcinei L	M	78
	Marcinho E	M	78

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what it lacks in real player names and realistic ball control, it makes up for in nippiness and ease of control. It also proves that virtually every move in the game can be implemented yet still left easy to effect, and that is a lesson the developers would do well to learn. EA's Canadian office were keen to go back to the drawing board after recognising the faults of *FIFA '96*, and with the World Cup license now safely in their hands, they have a very sound start for the '98

game. But only if the players move as fast as the likes of Ginola or McManaman rather than the likes of Plymouth Argyle or Stockport. It really is quite incredible that one single factor can affect a game's score so much, but when it is as major as the fault in *FIFA '97*, it cannot be ignored. After all, you wouldn't buy a car with a rusty engine would you?



P&P RATINGS	
Graphics	: 90
Animation	: 83
Sound FX	: 95
Music	: 91
Lastability	: 67
Playability	: 62



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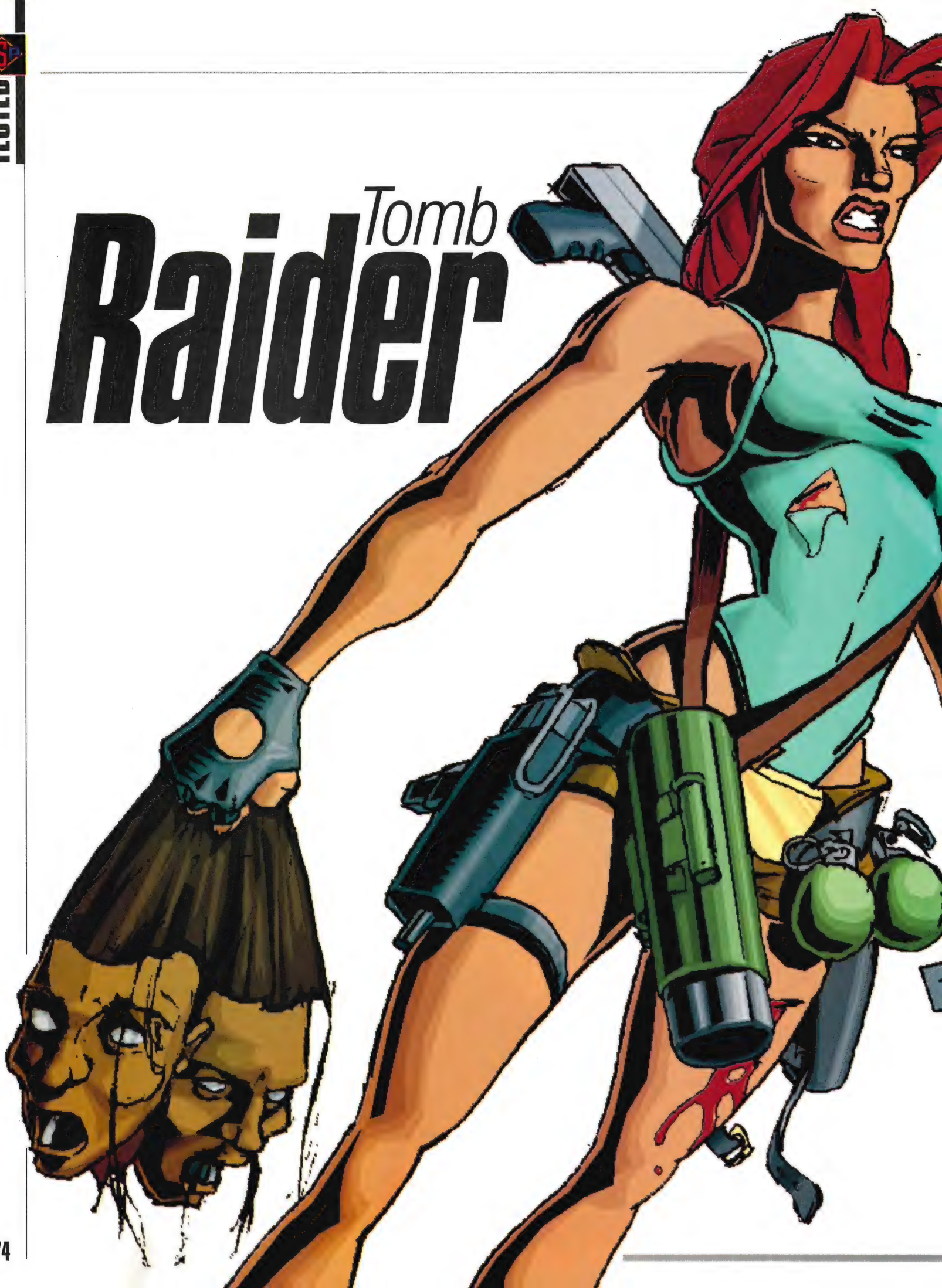
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Tomb *Raider*





it seems there are a number of ways to attempt an arcade/adventure on the PlayStation. There's the *Doom* method as seen in BMG's forthcoming *Exhumed* where the missions are seen through the first-person, or there's the *Resident Evil* variant wherein a number of fixed cameras are used to offer movie-style bird's-eye and equally dynamic angles. Alternatively, and as seen in *Fade To Black*, a solitary angle is often used, with the occasional zoom reaffirming that you should never underestimate the power of PlayStation. Core Design, however, have rewritten the rule book, and *Tomb Raider* is the video game equivalent of 'Challenge Annela' with an unseen cameraman following the buxom heroine, Lara Croft's, every move. Let's cut to the chase shall we?

Tomb Raider is quite simply one of the most stunning looking games to grace the PlayStation to date. Granted, it may not have the graphical finesse or attention to detail of *Resident Evil*'s light-sourced rooms and sprites, nor the in-your-face attention to detail of *Wipeout 2097*, but as Lara Croft runs, jumps and somersaults through the game's dank cav-

erns and labyrinthian catacombs the 3D world is so convincing that Core's intention of creating the 32bit equivalent of an Indiana Jones film is easily met. And considering the problems associated with clipping (the sudden appearance of polygons on the horizon) in past PlayStation releases, Core's development team have kept everything surprisingly smooth, with very few glitches getting in the way of Lara's exertions.

CROFT'S ORIGINAL

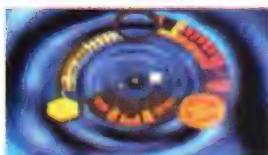
With Core planning to rival Indiana Jones in every department, the plot is a superb parallel to that of George Lucas' famed archaeologist. Born to aristocratic parents, Lara's future had been mapped out to the last detail: finishing school, marriage to an equally powerful family, etc. However, her life was to change beyond all recognition following a skiing trip which ended in tragedy. As Lara flew back to England, the chartered plane crashed in the snowy wastes of the Himalayas killing everybody apart from her. Lara was forced to fend for herself and do whatever necessary to stay alive, and did so for two weeks before eventually stumbling across a village and sanctuary. The experience had a profound affect on the debutante's life, though, and after such hardship Lara felt the world of dinner dances and the hoi-polloi too constricting, and eventually gave in to the wanderlust — travel-



ling the world and learning about ancient civilisations. Disgusted by her actions, Lara's parents disowned their daughter and thus she was forced to find means to fund her travels, recovering rare artifacts for the highest bidder and writing journals regarding her exploits. Her successful retrieval of a number of rare objects, however, now finds her in the employ of a shady business syndicate who have commissioned her to locate three missing segments of an object known as 'the Scion.' Lara's searches for the pieces lead her to levels based on Egyptian mythology, an Aztec tomb and Atlantis — thus allowing Core's graphics artists to flex their art packages and recreate the level detail as accurately as possible. However, as the Scion is retrieved, the plot twists and turns with the creatures getting ever more bizarre and the mission taking a strange, supernatural turn.

(BELOW) THE OBLIGATORY INTRODUCTORY SEQUENCE AND INTER-LEVEL SCENES UPDATE THE PLOT, DETAILING THE HISTORY OF THE SCION, AND LARA'S DISCOVERY OF HER PAYMASTER'S INTENTIONS FOR IT.

Release : NOVEMBER '96
Company : CORE DESIGN
Price : £44.95
Players : 1
Genre : ADVENTURE

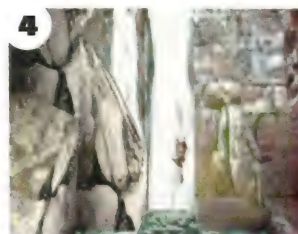
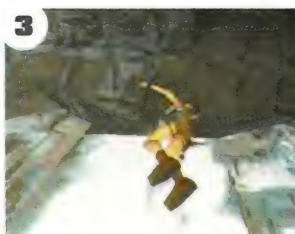
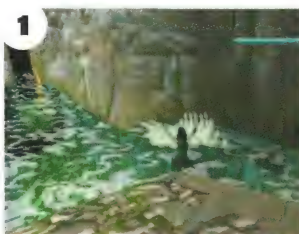


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MOVING STORY

Tomb Raider begins with Lara entering an Aztec temple, and with the player getting to grips with her athletic capabilities and gun-toting skills. Considering Lara is one of the most athletic sprites this side of *International Track and Field*, control over her assorted somersaults, sidesteps, jumps, and climbing abilities is ridiculously simple. Core have sensibly opted for a generic 'action'



TOMB RAIDER CONTINUALLY THROWS SURPRISES AT THE PLAYER, AND THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST. LARA STEPS INTO A STREAM ONLY TO BE PULLED ALONG BY THE UNDERCURRENTS — WITH A WATERFALL AT THE END...

WATER WINGS

Rivalling 'The Man from Atlantis', Lara Croft is also an accomplished swimmer, and gets to show off her skills at every opportunity. Large sections of the tombs and crypts are flooded, and Lara is forced to dive in and try to find alternative routes to escape or submerged switches to open up doors. Whenever she is submerged, Lara's brown health bar is replaced by a blue one which is reduced all the time she is under the surface. If the bar expires, her health bar reappears and is whittled away, after which Lara drowns in a spectacularly OTT animation. Alternatively, though, simply by popping up for air every now and then, our heroine can refill her considerable lungs (we knew there was a reason for her physique and not just to titillate Core's graphic artists) for the next leg of her swim.



button which intelligently senses which move is needed and puts her through her paces. As such, if the button is pressed while Lara is face to face with a waist-high ledge, she will clamber over it when the button is pressed. While pressing it while mid-air will make her reach for nearby ledges and pull herself up. The best control systems are those that effect the moves effortlessly and with minimal thought, and *Tomb Raider* scores highly in this department. There will

be the inevitable wranglings to begin with, and some of the more complex moves (walking backwards to drop off a ledge and then hold of it to break the fall springs to mind), but the levels are beautifully designed to gradually introduce the new moves and skills, so that by the time Atlantis is reached Lara is leaping through hoops Harrison Ford as Indiana Jones could barely squeeze through these days. The extent of Lara's moves is as incredible as the detail within the game itself. Whereas a series of caves and tombs should by rights start to get a bit dull after a while, the intricacy of *Tomb Raider*'s level design is absolutely breath-taking. Breaking up the stone walls and hieroglyphics are plants, shadowy areas, and seemingly innocuous ledges and fissures — the latter of which bring out the true archaeology adage of 'leave no stone unturned' to the fore as the player vainly searches every nook and cranny for power-ups and extra weapons.

All the old platform

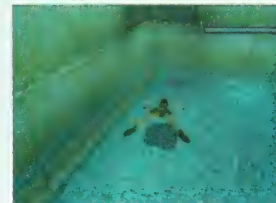
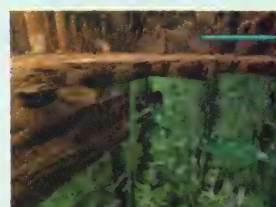
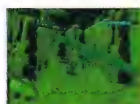
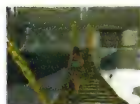
game favourites have been included, but never before have they looked so good. Lara's progress to the Scion pieces are beset by crumbling ledges, switches which open distant doors (which close again soon after), and sections of wall which the not so fair maiden can push to reveal hidden chambers and then use the moved slab as a platform to seemingly unreachable ledges. If such traits were used in a more conventional platformer, we'd be the first to spout on about their lack of originality, but within *Tomb Raider* they fit in seamlessly and just feel so... well, right.

Because of the 3D nature of the game, what would be obvious within a 2D play area isn't so blatant, and the simple puzzles enhance the game beautifully, tying in with the adventure scenario perfectly.

FAMILIAR COMMENTS

Tomb Raider ruthlessly lifts from every adventure film cliché imaginable. The sites Lara

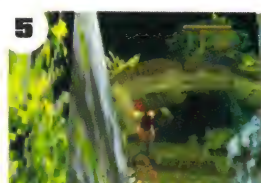
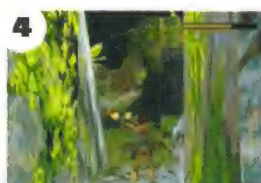
THE WALL DETAIL AND HIEROGLYPHS ARE ACCURATELY COPIED FROM REFERENCE BOOKS ABOUT EACH ERA.



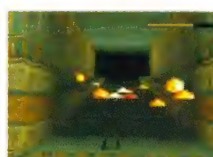


THROUGH THE KEYHOLE

If the main mission appears too daunting initially, *Tomb Raider* features a rather neat warm up level where the player is invited into Lara's sprawling country residence. Dressed in jogging bottoms and resembling one of the Spice Girls (obviously her khaki number isn't suitable for home wear), the player is taken through each of Lara's acrobatic skills as they enter each room. There are packing crates which allow her to master gripping ledges mid jump, or a large hall filled with crash mats for somersault practice. The final piece-de-resistance, however, comes with a trip to the swimming pool, where our tour ends and Lara gets ready for the adventure ahead.



explores are familiar Aztec settings, Roman cities, and even a 'Lost Valley' which could have been lifted from any Irwin Allen TV series you care to recall. Similarly, the adventures of Ms Croft are fraught with danger, and in addition to the perils offered by the collapsing ledges and narrow walkways, Lara is attacked by equally stereotypical animals and monsters. With the caves and temple acting as a warm up, Lara is under siege from wolves, bears, and bats, all of which are relatively easily dispatched – and all of whom sap her brown energy bar located to the top-right of the screen. As the game progresses, though, the wolves and the like give way to simian mutants with unbelievable strength, crocodiles, Velociraptors (yes, even Jurassic Park is plagiarised!), and bizarre temple-guarding freaks which guard the final stages. Thankfully, Lara is armed with a pistol and an infinite supply of bul-



lets, and further weapons include UZIs, a Magnum and shotguns, although the ammo for these is limited. In addition to extra weaponry, Lara can replace lost health using medical packs which are conveniently left around each stage, and everything Lara collects is stored in a backpack which she opens and examines whenever the Select button is pressed. In keeping with the simplistic nature of the puzzles, other objects for our heroine to collect are keys and assorted icons and artifacts which are invariably used a few feet away from where they were found.

SCION'S FICTION

Tomb Raider is one of the finest examples of the arcade/adventure genre you



Opinion *Tomb Raider* won me over immediately with its large sprites and an initial urge to explore the stunning-looking play area. After a while, the wanderlust started to wane as my acrobatic sprite seemed to be wandering mostly empty corridors, but thankfully things started hotting up after a bit more exploration revealed hidden chambers, key and switch-puzzles and a rather pissed-off dinosaur that made the one chasing Jeff Goldblum and co in Jurassic Park look like a real patsy. After a false start, *Tomb Raider* is an absolutely engrossing game, with control over the Lara sprite effortless, while still retaining the need for pixel-perfect precision and spot-on timing from the player. A memory card is essential due to the large size of the game, but this is an outstanding game and one of the best of its kind. **SM**



could hope to find, and the extra control it offers over, say, *Resident Evil*, also make it more of an immediately playable game. It is also a very big game, and Lara's quest for Scion will keep even the most adept adventurers on their toes, with the later levels requiring brain power, reflexes, and accuracy. That said, *Tomb Raider* is not without fault. As big as the levels are, there are times when nothing seems to happen for ages. This is more prevalent at the start of the game, where a lot of time is spent wandering around only to be attacked by the occasional bat or wolf, or stumbling to the bottom of a chasm because you haven't quite mastered the jumps or gripping the ledges. This aside, perseverance reaps its

own rewards, and any gripes that can be levelled at *Tomb Raider* are only minor. For months now we have been hoping for a platform game that truly warrants a 32bit release, and Core have delivered that and much more. *Tomb Raider* is one of the few games that plays as well as it looks, and while individually the content of the game is far from original, as a complete package this is Core's finest hour, and a perfect showcase for what the PlayStation can do.

(BELOW) THE FINAL BOSS IS A HUGE ARACHNID HYBRID WHO IS INCREDIBLY HARD TO KILL. HERE'S A HINT THOUGH: KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR A LEDGE WHERE LARA WILL BE JUST OUT OF REACH.



PSP FIGHTS...

Graphics : 94
Animation : 92
Sound FX : 86
Music : 81
Lastability : 93
Playability : 91

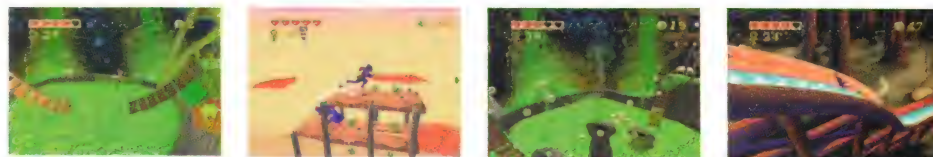
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Pandemonium!

1 In the year or so PlayStation Plus has been on sale, the Plus

Points pages have often been the site for complaints about our so-called constant criticism of the platform games available for the Sony machine. Following damning reviews of *Rayman*, *Johnny Bazoocatone*, and less than enthralled ratings for the likes of *Earthworm Jim 2* and *Cheesy the Mouse* we have often been accused of disliking the genre and being unduly harsh on the said releases. Not so. For me, the platform genre is the one where you are most likely to find some of the most playable games for any machine. Nintendo's continuation of the *Mario* series has constantly turned up new ideas and logically evolved the concept to make the most of each new machine's capabilities — indeed, *Super Mario World* for Super NES still rates as THE greatest platform game to date, and puts many that

THE TWO HEROES FEATURE INDIVIDUAL SKILLS, WITH NIKKI MORE ADEPT AT ACROBATICS, WHILE FARGUS IS A DAB HAND WITH SPELLS.



followed in its shade. Our greatest problem, is that none of the platform games for the PlayStation have stretched the machine or tried anything new. Great, so *Rayman* is a nice enough platformer, but it is still the same old ideas as have graced the Megadrive for nigh-on five years. Similarly, in *Earthworm Jim 2* there was a chance to expand upon a very playable game and make it even better with the addition of ideas the 16bit system could never handle. Nope, we get the same essentially enjoyable game, but for the same price as the 16bit versions released two years ago. The only real advance in PlayStation platform games came with Sony's home-grown *Crash Bandicoot*, a nice enough idea which ventured into the realms of 3D and only fell at the frustration hurdle.

Quite simply, we have nothing against platform games. We just have a



problem with quick and easy cash-ins, and games which place aesthetic values over the playability the genre is famed for. *Pandemonium!*, however, is quite simply the new benchmark by which all future PlayStation platform games will be judged...

SOMETHING OLD.. *Pandemonium!* is the nearest you are going to get to a perfect PlayStation platform game for the time being. It

takes gambles with a number of fancy camera views, but never sacrifices its basic playability in the quest for 'suitably 32bit' graphics. It also offers the most instinctive control over its two sprites since Shigeru Miyamoto came up with the idea of a certain Brooklyn plumber. One of the most frustrating areas of the platform genre — and one which has haunted it since its inception — is that situations occur wherein the loss of a life or energy is inevitable. In *Pandemonium!* if either the jester or the acrobat (named

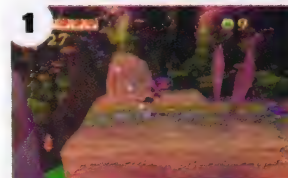


Release : DECEMBER '96
Company : BMG
Price : £44.95
Players : 1
Genre : PLATFORM

Fargus and Nikki respectively) come to any harm, the fault can always be laid at the player's feet, which makes the completion of each level even more satisfying.

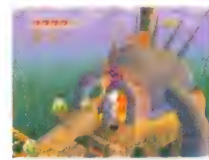
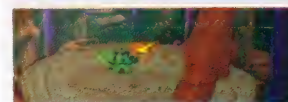
Pandemonium! reuses ideas from dozens of past platformers, from the basic collection chores of the gems that litter each stage, to the end-of-stage bosses which appear every six levels. However, because everything in the game gels so well, what would be considered tired ideas in, say, *Cheesy the Mouse* or *Rayman* are just an acceptable part of a playable title. After all, receiving extra bonuses for scouring each stage in search of the said gems is nothing new, but *Pandemonium!* is so full of little extras and secret locations fraught with danger that makes the risk more worthwhile than its rivals.

Getting back to basics, although *Pandemonium!* is very much a traditional 'levels and ledges' platformer, its execution makes it look unlike any other of its kind. *Crash Bandicoot's* foray into the 3D arena opted for the more conventional first-person viewpoint, while developers Crystal Dynamics have created a floating camera system which tracks the player's sprite and zooms in and out of the action. As such, as the jester or acrobat pelt through the themed stages, the camera zooms in and out with such manic ferocity that its accentuates the speed of the game and looks absolutely breathtaking. It also has the benefit of allowing the player to see pitfalls and hazards on the horizon, following the old adage that forewarned is fore-armed, and acting as a more beneficial



BRINGING OUT THE ANIMAL IN YOU...

At certain points in the game, Fargus and Nikki pass through what appear to be two obelisks straddling the path. On passing between the two stones, the sprite is turned into an animal more suited to the landscape ahead, with the pair morphing into frogs, a dragon, a turtle and a rhino. Each creature is suitably endowed with special abilities needed for the next section, the rhino killing anything in its path with its charging attack, the frog leaping from object to object with ease (and further showing off the dazzling panning skills of the camera system), and the dragon affording the user the option of both flying and fire-breathing skills. As with every other aspect of the game, the change into one of the aforementioned beasts merges with the action beautifully, with the dragon's assorted skills slowing down the action slightly, but requiring pixel-perfect movement in order to bypass the many hazards in its path. The effect remains until a second pair of gates are passed, whereupon the sprite is returned to normal.



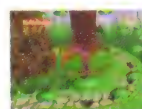
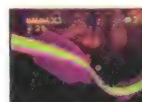
(1-4) SPELLS TAKE THE FORM OF COLOURED CRYSTALS WHICH ADD A PROJECTILE WEAPON TO THE USER'S INVENTORY. OF THESE, THE ICE BEAM IS THE MOST IMPRESSIVE, FREEZING ANYONE IN ITS PATH, AFTER WHICH THEY SHATTER WHEN TOUCHED.

use for the fancy technique.

PAIR OF JOKERS

Pandemonium! offers eighteen stages, and three boss-es. The stages are all familiar territory with old favourites like mud mines and ice worlds, rubbing shoulders with sky cities and forests, each inhabited by enlarged insects, missiles, and suitably themed adversaries which tie in with each stage's look. In keeping with *Pandemonium!*'s style of nicking ideas from past games but doing them better, our heroes can kill foes using the age-old 'jump on their heads' method, although a difference in abilities makes Fargus slightly more adept when it comes to handling scores of enemy sprites. Each stage is preceded by a visit to a map screen wherein each world is presented in order from left to right. Before the level is entered, the player is invited to switch between Nikki or Fargus using the triangle button. Although the controls are predominantly the same for both sprites — jump, fire a spell if collected, or crouch — Fargus is equipped with a cartwheel attack which kills pretty much anything in its path while Nikki lives up to her acrobat title and can

THE 3D AND SWIRLING CAMERA ANGLES ARE NEVER BETTER DISPLAYED THAN WHEN THE ACTION IS VIEWED FROM AFAR.



extend her jumps with a secondary mid-air push. The subtle differences between the two make them more suitable for individual levels, with Fargus being particularly useful during the fungus stage where dozens of mushrooms spit venom, and Nikki coming into her own during a stunning wood shed level, where conveyor belts lead on to buzzsaws, and where long jumps on to passing timbers are essential. The beauty of the system is that either character could manage in any of the levels so the frustration factor of *Crash* ►►





(1-3) ANOTHER BENEFIT OF THE CAMERA SYSTEM IS THAT IT CONSTANTLY THROWS SURPRISES AT THE PLAYER. AS THE FARGUS SPRITE TEARS TOWARDS A WATERFALL THE CAMERA SWITCHES TO THE REAR OF THE ROCKFACE — JUST IN TIME TO SEE THE JESTER EMERGE AND FALL TO THE GROUND!

MID-LEVEL CRISIS

Pandemonium! even throws in a few mid-level bosses to spice things up, but rather than follow the age-old method of shooting them a million times before they explode, puzzles and genuine skill are needed to defeat them. For example, one of the first bosses appears in the centre of a large circuit, and proceeds to chase Fergus or Nikki around the perimeter. However, a switch system allows the player to trigger bombs which duly drift to the other side of the play area, after which the player must lure the boss into its path so the explosion stuns the pursuing boss — however, all the time Fergus or Nikki are being chased, a number of buzzsaw blades are also doing the rounds, necessitating split-second timing from the player. It's a refreshing change from bosses of yore...



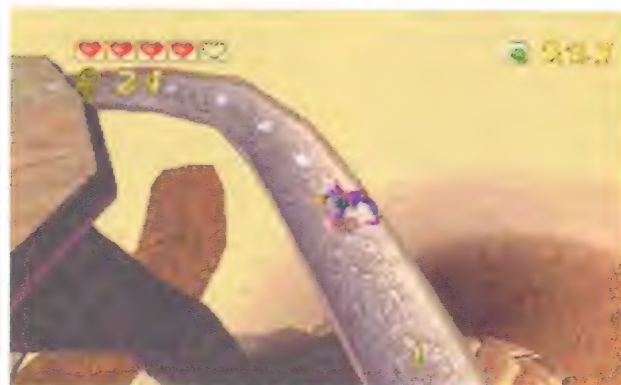
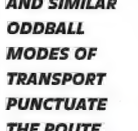
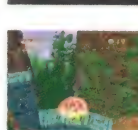
Bandicoot is never felt, but the specific abilities makes the aforementioned collection of every gem even more achievable.

Although 18 stages doesn't sound a great deal, each is incredibly well designed and mixes the expected baddies and pitfalls with some original ideas. Thus, if Fergus is legging it through the forest, a series of spider web trampolines may appear to help ascend the heights, while Nikki fights against barely visible gusts of wind — which culminate in a stunning level where our heroes are blown at full speed through a winding wind tunnel while still attempting to grab hold of keys as they do so. Basically, you name a platform game cliché, and *Pandemonium!* not only uses it, but makes it work. Keys are collected to open up previously inaccessible areas, spikes jut in and out to impale and unwary hero, ice acts as a slide, and the game has more collapsing platforms than *Sega*. Everything is familiar, but everything flows as well as the stunning camera

work creating one of the most well-balanced titles this side of *Mario*.

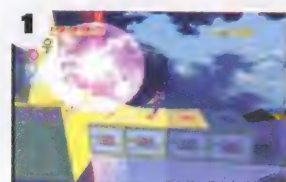
HOCUS FOCUS

Power-ups are the norm for virtually every game these days, and *Pandemonium!* is no exception. Once again, the individual skills of the two sprites come into play with their use, and Fergus' spell-casting abilities make for even more impressive



visual trickery. Spells are represented by large glowing crystals which are normally hidden just out of immediate range. Collecting them, effuses the sprite with a like-coloured glow, and pressing the circle button prompts a spell which acts like a missile and tears ahead of the running sprite. Depending on the colour of the spell collected, the properties range from a conventional missile which dissolves anything it touches, to the more visually effective ice spell which shoots across the screen leaving a blue vapour trail

and freezes anything it touches — with the recipient crumbling into smaller shards when touched. Other spells also include a green crystal which temporarily shrinks the enlarged spiders and snails down to normal size (where they can be crushed underfoot!), and a grey invincibility spell



(1-3) THE BACKDROPS INCLUDE DESERTS, FORESTS AND ICE WORLDS, AND ALSO FEATURE IDEAS FROM PLATFORM GAMES OF YORE — INCLUDING A ROTATING TOWER AKIN TO THAT OF HEWSON'S C64 CLASSIC, NEBULUS.





ished the screen cuts to a large Nikki or Fargus sprite keeling over. Due to the winding nature of the play area, a number of stages — the sky city being one of the most notable — feature small cloud-like platforms which span a bottomless drop. If either sprite falls off a ledge, death is instantaneous, and incredibly frustrating. But at least the only person you can blame is yourself. Following the precedent set by *Sonic the Hedgehog*, collecting 100 of the aforementioned gems which punctuate the play area (clusters of which are also found within crates) also have the side effect of adding an extra life to the tally, but collecting one of the golden ank icons which appear infrequently is a slightly quicker method.

MINIHEAD

It is hard to define what is so good about *Pandemonium!*. Graphically, it is both stunning yet functional, with the camera views adding to the general frenetic feel the action offers. Likewise, while the gameplay is the same as virtually every other platform known to man, it just feels perfect. Control over both sprites is incredibly easy, and although their assorted attacks and jumps are limited, they fit in with the speed of play perfectly. basically, the reason *Pandemonium!* appeals is because it is very much a sum of its parts. If you were to list its contents on paper individually it

which covers the sprite in what appears to be a suit of armour. The spells last indefinitely and are automatically replaced by the last one to be collected, but if Nikki or Fargus bump into an enemy sprite or lose energy some other way, the spells are lost.

Each character begins the game with three lives, the length of which is governed by an energy bar located to the top of the screen. This is reduced every time the characters come to harm, and if fully replen-



Opinion At long last the PlayStation gets the platform game it deserves. *Pandemonium!* is as playable as it is fast, and the combination of stunning visual effects and the most instinctive gameplay this side of *Mario* makes for a game which leaves the likes of *Rayman*, *Johnny Bazookatone* and *Earthworm Jim* back in 16bit obscurity where they belong. Although most of its ideas are old, the implementation is flawless, and made even better by new ideas such as wind tunnels and strange teleporting holes in the ground. Crystal Dynamics may have made a faltering start with the likes of *Total Eclipse*, but this proves what they are really capable of.

SM

would be just another *Cheesy the Mouse* or *Earthworm Jim* 2. However, the platform action is fast, and is further assisted by the camera angles which enhance the feeling of speed. In turn, the speed makes collecting 100% of the gems or the keys that open up areas of the screen trickier, while collecting the said objects opens up new areas to each level. *Pandemonium!* is one of the most rounded games ever seen on any format. It still lacks that certain indefinable quality that

makes most people return to a *Mario* game after months of abstinence (a few more levels, perhaps?), but *Pandemonium!* is great fun while it lasts and far out paces its more sedate rivals. If Crystal Dynamics ever needed a game to make up for the likes of *Total Eclipse* and *Off-World Interceptor*, this is the best apology I could think of. Brilliant.



PSP RATING...

Graphics : 93
Animation : 88
Sound FX : 90
Music : 86
Lastability : 90
Playability : 92

But only Lomax
can turn him...





You are probably aware by now that *Star Gladiator* is

Capcom's very first foray into the world of 3D beat 'em ups. It is perhaps surprising that a company who has dominated the 2D beat 'em up field should have waited so long to give a 3D fighter a go. Well here it is. Whilst the *Street Fighter* fans amongst you may be saddened that Capcom's first 3D beater wasn't a continuation of the now legendary *Street Fighter* series, everyone who likes fighting games should rejoice that finally *Star Gladiator* is here.

The plot is all about a gang of four mismatched (yet lovable) brawlers who have to save the world by kicking the six baddies heads in. This struggle is represented by the now very familiar one-on-one beat 'em up format, with everyone taking turns to be violent to one another. In the one player mode you take on all ten other fighters (including a mirror version of yourself and the big boss) in a row. When you have defeated all nine regular fighters you face the boss at his special base.

Once you have defeated him then planet Earth is safe from his advancing armies. As well as the arcade mode there is a versus (two player) mode, a training mode (where neither character has an energy bar, and one of the characters never moves), and a group battle mode (where each side picks three characters, and when one character loses a round the next one has to be used until all of one player's characters have been defeated).



CONNECT FOUR

The control system is quite simple for a modern day beat 'em up, but as you get used to the game you can put it to more sophisticated use. There are two regular attack buttons, one kick button, and a guard button. Each offensive button can be used to activate different attacks by combining



their presses with a prod of the Dpad. There are also more complex attacks and combos available by pressing the attack buttons in a certain order (see I Like To Move It), and these spectacular moves are very handy for not only defeating your enemy, but humiliating them as well. However, if you get hit whilst performing the sequence you have to start again, but there

are also "counter" moves to stop your enemy doing unto you. Simply press guard, back, and one of the attack buttons, and your character flashes for a split second. If your opponent is foolish enough to strike you whilst you are flashing, then your character automatically performs a special counter attack, halting your enemy's attack and taking away a fair



Star Gladiators

**STAR
GLADIATOR'S
PLOT GOES TO
POT AS BADDIE
FIGHTS BADDIE
AND GOODIE
FIGHTS
GOODIE.**



Release DECEMBER '96
Company VIRGIN/CAPCOM
Price £44.95
Players 1-2
Genre BEAT 'EM UP





amount of their health. You can also use the guard button to roll out of the way of attacks, in a similar manner to *Battle Arena Toshinden*. Like *Battle Arena Toshinden*, the area you fight in is actually 3D. In *Tekken*, while the graphics were in 3D, the actual gameplay wasn't – the combatants just move back and forth on a 2D plane. In *Star Gladiator* if you roll the wrong way when you're close to the edge you risk falling out of the arena, and forfeiting the round to your opponent.

DOWNFALL

Forcing your opponent out of the ring is certainly one way to finish them off, but other methods include the rather



boring having more energy than them when the timer runs out routine, and the far more impressive finishes. As well as some mas-

sive energy sapping combos, you can utilise your characters powers-up for a massive swipe at their opponent, this can be done by pressing down all the attack buttons. If you manage to hit your opponent with this awesome assault you remove a huge chunk of their energy. This move can only be performed once a round, and if it knocks out your opponent you see a replay of the final few blows of your conquest. Very satisfying indeed. Your opponents are smarter than the average assailant, and simply pulling off one move again and again doesn't guarantee success as it does in some of *Star Gladiator's* more limited rivals. The graphics throughout are spectacular, with some of the best animation and backdrops yet seen on a PlayStation beat 'em up. The Power of the PlayStation™ is used to give all the weapons an impressive glowy look, and when the fighters lash out the attacks are nicely motion blurred in a manga style. Not only are the graphics excellent but the gameplay is fabulous too. Everything feels right, and even if you are used to



I LIKE TO MOVE IT



This is the training mode. You can fiddle with options and customise it to your specific needs. Basically you use the key in the top right hand corner to activate your character's specials. To activate your best moves though, you need to know the correct button to press after you have successfully pulled off the sequence shown here. For example, after Gore has just completed his BABAB combo, pressing A will initiate the final move which does masses of damage – in this case growing to giant size and hitting your opponent with a stick. The moves require practice to get right, but it is terribly rewarding to render your opponent gobs-maked as you perform incredible combos.

CHARACTERS

GOODIES

Our heros, the gallant gladiators of the Federation. Let me introduce them.



HAYATO KANZAKI

Luke-Skywalkerbloke. He's got a light sabre – nice! He's a bit moody though, but popular with the birds.



SATURN DYER

At the other end of the scale is the yo-yo wielding Saturn. Nice teeth, but I'm a bit worried about his complexion



JUNE LIN MILLIAM

June is the girlie, and unfortunately looks like the bird in Bis. The similarities end there, though.



GAMOF GOHGRY

Gamof uses a big axe to hit people with. He has been practising since he was a small child.

BADDIES

The dark side. Watch out for these guys. They are very naughty boys indeed.



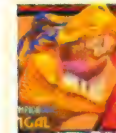
GORE GAJAN

He looks cute in the game, but here he looks like a right menace. He is bad though. Bad to the bone.



FRANCO GERELT

Errol Flynnbloke, Gerelt carries more of a light foil than a light sabre. It's still very nasty, so watch out.



RINGAL

Ringal managed to escape from Primal Rage, and now lives inside Star Gladiator. He has a skull/stick combination.



ZELKIN FISKEKROGEN

Zelkin's crazy name is bonkers enough, but he also happens to be a bird. He gets invited to all the best parties.



VECTOR

Vector is a cold blooded unthinking robot. He exists only to kill. He enjoys macrame on his days off.



THE CHARACTERS POSE FOR THE CAMERA. WHEN THEY'RE NOT BEATING EACH OTHER UP THEY DO THEIR BEST TO LOOK MOODY.

one style of control method you will soon be able to pick *Star Gladiator's* intuitive system up. There are options to change the time limit that is put on bouts (ranging from 20 seconds to no time limit), the amount of rounds each fight takes, the amount of damage each character's hits take off their opponents energy, and the difficulty level. There are eight difficulty levels, ranging from pretty easy to not-that-difficult, actually. I'm no great player of beat 'em ups, and after a few days play I was getting through the highest setting without using that many continues. However, the real challenge is completing *Star*

Gladiator without using a continue and finding the full ending. There are loads of special move combinations to discover, and also some hidden characters to fight. As always with beat 'em ups, the two player mode is the most fun, and the group battle mode is even more fun than the usual versus mode. If you finish the game you also get the fantastic "wall mode", where the arena is surrounded by an invisible force field, and each player's blow delivers a lot more punch, resulting in a battle that sends the fighters flying all over the place. When you deliver the final blow to your opponent the force field is turned off and he or she goes flying miles out of the ring. Superb. This feature is something I have never seen in any other similar game, and it helps

Opinion This is a very good game indeed. As good as anything else I have played on the PlayStation, this has to be the best beat 'em up you can run on your small grey box of tricks. Only a fool would dismiss it as just another beater, and even if you think *Tekken 2* is the postman's pants, you are doing yourself a disservice in not investigating *Star Gladiator*.

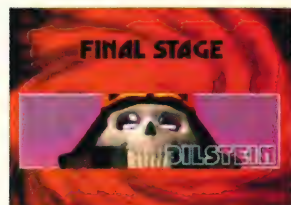
TC



SATURN MISSES AGAIN. GERELT DODGES OUT OF THE WAY BUT HASN'T MANAGED TO HIT SATURN ONCE. WITH ONLY NINE SECONDS LEFT ON THE CLOCK THINGS ARE LOOKING TIGHT.

THE BOSS

Looking a bit like a big Darth Vader with a massive sword, Bilstien is the evil genius who is bent on galactic conquest. His zone is circular, so you have to be especially careful of falling off. Bilstien is the only boss... or IS he? Fight your way through the game without using a continue for a nasty surprise...



improve the lastability greatly. You can save your preferences to memory card, and the game remembers if you have already finished it, so you can access the wall mode as soon as you boot up.

GO FOR BROKE.

Here's the crunch. I personally don't rate *Tekken 2* that highly. For some reason I was never as bowled over by it as everyone else seemed to be. However, I just love *Star Gladiator*. Despite the control

method that requires a lot of experimentation to find and successfully pull off the special moves, it has the best feel of any beat 'em up on the PlayStation.

The characters all have a feel of weight, and the characters (though there aren't a huge number of them) are all sufficiently interesting and different to make them worth playing. The polygon graphics are used imaginatively, and the whole game has a different look to the

usual tired beat 'em ups that we see so often.

Star Gladiators is certainly one of the very best games on the PlayStation, and I have no hesitation in recommending it to anyone. It's not just a tasty fighting cake, but a whole banquet of brawling. Ardent *Tekken 2* fans may reckon it small fry compared to their favourite fighting feast, but personally I would rather have a bash on *Star Gladiator* than *Tekken 2*, *Mortal Kombat Trilogy*, *Street Fighter Alpha 2*, or *Battle Arena Toshinden*. This (for the moment) is the best fighting game available on any home system.



PSP EDIT...

Graphics : 94
Animation : 92
Sound FX : 77
Music : 72
Lastability : 87
Playability : 89

91

THE JOKE'S ON YOU IF YOU DON'T GET IT.

'Pandemonium is positively
stunning... a more than
worthy contender
to Crash's Best
Platform Game
crown...
noticeably
superior'

Official UK Playstation Magazine

92%

Mean, Machines Playstation

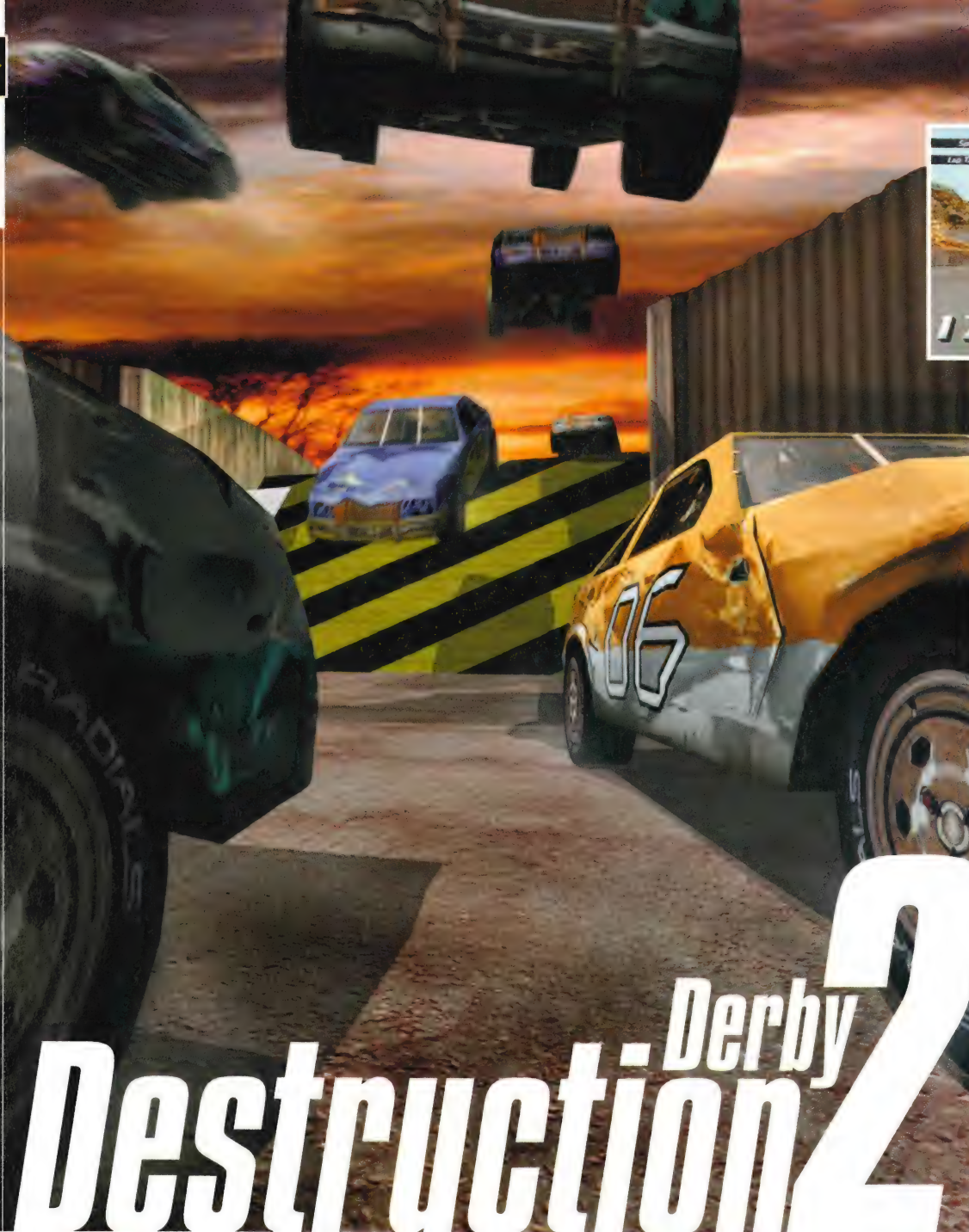


Pandemonium!™

Check out Crystal Dynamic's new website at <http://www.crystald.com>

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the destruction derby "total destruction" game, which is the same as destruction derby mode, except all the computer cars aim straight for you. Surviving is tricky to say the least, and it's the length of time rather than the points you can accumulate that is important here.

YOU'VE LOST YOUR HOO!

The controls are nice and simple. There are no gears, just accelerate, break (which doubles for reverse if pressed when you're not moving), and a button for making your turns sharper. The handling of the car takes a little more getting used to than in other arcade racers, but once you do you're sorted. However, if you get used to one particular view you may have trouble with the other one.

Personally I find the in-car view better for proper racing, and the behind-car view for the wrecking games. It gives you a better view of your car and the cars around you, but it feels slightly odd to control. Your car, unlike, say, *Ridge Racer Revolution*, can be damaged, and if you are hit too many times it can be

the original *Destruction Derby* was one of the PlayStation's launch games, and made a new record for the number of CD game sales. It was very popular indeed, combining fast racing action with cars getting smashed up lots. At the time everyone thought it was very smart indeed, but the game engine was 2D, even though the graphics were 3D. This meant that there were no hills or dips, and no matter how hard a car got smashed into, it always stayed on the

ground. The actual racing section was also flawed, with things usually degenerating into a massive smash up, with the player's car getting wasted before it could reach the finishing line. *Destruction Derby 2* now has a true 3D engine, more race modes, more tracks, more cars, and more stuff generally. Is it the smash 'em up perfection we've all been waiting for, or is it banger racing just outside Elsenham on a rainy Sunday?

There are three different types of "race" in *Destruction Derby 2*. First is your basic stock-car racing, where the idea is simply to finish the race before everyone else. Wrecking racing takes place on the same sort of circuits, but this time the aim of the game is to score points by



DEBRIS FLIES EVERYWHERE IN THE NEW CHAPTER OF THE DESTRUCTION DERBY SAGA.

spinning your opponents' cars round and destroying them. Finally there is the full on destruction derby mode, where all the cars are put in a big arena and proceed to smash each other up as in the wrecking racing mode. There is also

written off. This time round there is a pit that you can use once a race to repair your car, but this doesn't replace lost hoods or wheels. After practising a few times (on the helpfully named practice mode) you are ready to race.

When you have chosen either stock-car or wrecking racing, you are placed into

division four of the destruction derby league, which is a bit odd to say the least. All



Release : NOVEMBER '96

Company : PSYGNOSIS

Price : £44.95

Players : 1

Genre : RACING

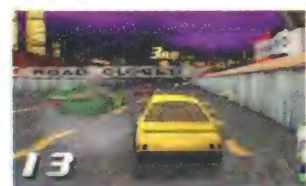


four divisions race at the same time on the circuits, but fear not, you don't have to come in the top three to continue to the next race. You can keep losing race after race and the worst thing that can happen to you is that you can be relegated. However, if you earn enough points you are promoted to a higher league, and you can race on different circuits. As you gain access to the higher leagues, more tracks are opened up on the options screen. When you start you can only practice a few of the circuits, but by the time you have reached the top league you can use all the circuits.

EASY ON THE PAINT WORK!

Destruction Derby's game engine is absolutely superb. It is easily the best 3D engine on any PlayStation racer, and it looks and runs brilliantly.

All the cars are gouraud shaded, and the tracks are made up of texture mapped polygons. There are tons of cars on the screens, and when they collide (which is most of the time) they can flip over or shoot up into the air, spin round or just sit in the middle



(ABOVE) THIS SECTION OF THE LIBERTY CITY COURSE TAKES PLACE ON AN ONLY PARTIALLY CONSTRUCTED SECTION OF ROAD. UNSUPRISINGLY THERE ARE A LOT OF SKIDS AND BUMPS, SO YOU NEED TO UTILISE ALL OF YOUR ENORMOUS DRIVING SKILL JUST TO STAY TRAVELLING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

FASTER PUSSYCAT! KILL! KILL!

These are the circuit on which you get to cause, quite literally, carnage. The first seven are proper racing tracks, and the last four are the arena where things go a bit mental. Study them and survive.



EXTRA HEADING TO GO IN HERE



THESE ARENAS ARE A TOP LAUGH, DUE TO SOME UNUSUAL ADDITIONS TO THE TOPOGRAPHY. THE RED PIKE ARENA HAS A HUGE BUMP IN THE MIDDLE WHICH MAKE THE CARS FLY ALL OVER THE PLACE, THE PIT HAS A (YES) PIT IN THE MIDDLE WHICH ALL THE CARS TEND TO FALL INTO, AND DEATH BOWL HAS A CRUSHING ZONE WHICH YOU DIE IF YOU FALL INTO IT. THE COLOSSEUM HAS NOTHING ODD.



of a massive pile up with bits flying off them. There are only two views, but both are usable, and the action seems especially fast when you use the *Ridge Racer* style in car view. Sadly the replay mode isn't that hot, with only a computer selected view being available, and you can't fast forward or rewind, the only thing you can do is slow the action down. The courses are well designed too, with new additions like jumps, hills and banked corners. Some tracks split into two so you have a choice of path, and on

others there are sections where the tracks shrink to the width of about two cars. These bits are conducive to barmy multi car pile ups, with unlucky cars and mountains of debris shooting all over the shop. You really do have to see it to believe it. In my opinion this is the best looking game on the PlayStation, with so many top lighting effects that it actually feels like you're there™.

Playing the thing is even better. Every smash feels satisfyingly meaty, and the jumps and bumps are all



great fun to utilise in a quest for high speed wreckage. So there we have it. High speed exhilarating gameplay, amazing graphics, clever course designs...marvellous. There's a *but* coming up, here it is:

YOU'RE ON FIRE!

There are some minor problems with *Destruction Derby 2*. Ranging from the way that the scoring system only recognises horizontal spins to the fact that the pits take an age to use and there is no way to skip it if you accidentally go down the pit lane.

Perhaps the most annoying aspect of the game is the fact that the slightest slip up costs you so dear that it is high-on impossible to ever come first in all but the easiest stock-car races. You can still make progress up the

leagues and eventually win the whole competition (relatively) easily, although it's a pain having to quit out and load up your old game every time you take a tumble. (This could easily be remedied by having a simple restart race option but no...) The wrecking racing mode is flawed in that the best way to score points on most circuits is simply to hang about on a tricky corner and wait for your opponents to come round. When they do you just force your way in hoping for a few decent spins. With practice you can almost always make progress using this tactic, but it isn't that much fun. All you do is bash the other cars till your vehicle is about to explode, repair it in the pits, and then do it till you DO explode. On the later circuits



OCCASIONALLY THE COURSE GETS VERY TIGHT, AND ALL THE CARS GET COMPLETELY SMASHED UP. ONE UNFORTUNATE HAS FLIPPED OVER. HE IS NOW SCUPPERED.



BLIMEY O'RILEY!

The proper 3D of *Destruction Derby 2* means that there is the potential for some absolutely spectacular crashes and jumps. Just take a look at the following pictures and imagine them in smoothly moving 3D. Nice.



more of your opponents cars get trashed by the pack, you can race round after them preying on these victims. This is more fun, but there is never any incentive to attempt racing properly, which is what all the other cars seem to be doing. The destruction derby mode works more or less exactly as it should, but there is hardly any long term interest in what is just meant to be a simple distraction for five minutes...

CHORTLE!

Hang on a minute. *Destruction Derby 2*, whilst requiring perseverance to get the hang of, is ultimately a rather shallow game. Which is fine, if you're after that sort of thing. *Destruction Derby 2* is the sort of game that you will dig out and have a bash on again, but it's hardly absorbing or subtle. What we have here is an addictive and playable game that fails to work as a progressive challenge. Like last month's *Cool Borders*, if you buy this game you will certainly get your money's worth of play out of it over the years, but it won't grab you and shake

Opinion Whilst *Destruction Derby 2* is undeniably a huge improvement over the limited original, there still isn't a long term challenge underneath all the flash graphics. If you don't mind that, then *Destruction Derby 2* is quite probably the most technically impressive racer on the PlayStation, and if you persevere to get the hang of it, then you will be rewarded with a game that you will be able to have a pop at now and again for ages and ages.

TC



you about like *Wipeout 2097* – which, if you are after a stiff challenge or a link up game, will fit snugly up your street. *Destruction Derby 2* may not be the all conquering epic that *Wipeout 2097* manages to be, but it is certainly worth getting if you are at all interested in an alternative to all the other dull and predictable racing games that seems to be two-a-penny on the PlayStation.

There are lots of new racers on the horizon (such as the new *Ridge Racer* game *Rage Racer*), ready to overtake today's current champions, but with this and *Wipeout 2097* your need for speed (and mindless destruction) should be sorted for a while.



PSP RATING...

Graphics : 95

Animation : 94

Sound FX : 82

Music : 71

Lastability : 83

Playability : 88

89

BANKED CURVES – AN ALL NEW FEATURE IN DESTRUCTION DERBY 2. VERY FAST INDEED.



THESE COPS ARE ANIMALS



'... there's lots to
recommend about Firo & Klawd'
MEAN MACHINES PSX

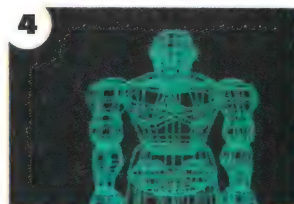
85%
C&VG

Police Force? More like Police farce if you ask me.

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THE VICTORY BOXING INTRO. TWO BOXERS FACE OFF: WHO WILL TRIUMPH? WE MAY NEVER KNOW.



Victory Boxing



right. Boxing. Lets get one thing straight right away. Call me a wussy liberal if you like, but boxing ranks alongside fox hunting as one of the worst sports ever invented. Watching two men attempt to damage each others' minds in the shortest amount of time doesn't really appeal to me for some reason. Of course, you may think boxing is top, and are probably itching to know what *Victory Boxing* is like, so I put all my judgements aside and had a look.

Boxing can be a fantastically lucrative business, but for the majority of pugilists there's nothing but pain and suffering with no light at the end of the tunnel.

However, you, as a new boxing kid on the block, are determined to be a star. Nothing, be it lawsuits or suited gangsters, will get in your way. But before you start out



on the road to being a boxing legend, you need one thing...a manager.

Yes. Where would major talents be without someone to take away 10% of their profits? There is but one manager in *Victory Boxing*, an obvious Don King look-alike called Edward King. So, you've got a little bit of skill, you've got an over-enthusiastic manager, but you haven't yet been turned into a quivering wreck by being punched too much in the head, so it's time to fight. Of course, *Queensbury Rules* is a bit different to *Mortal Street*

Kombat Gladiators, so *Victory Boxing* plays completely differently. Does it attempt starting on such top fighters as *Tekken 2* and *Star Gladiator*, or does it sit quietly in the corner of the pub minding its own boxing business?

STIMULATION

Victory Boxing is as far removed from other fighting games as you can imagine. It is a true boxing simulation, and it's realistic rather than sensationally over the top. You can even, RPG style, design your own boxer per-

Release: TBA
Company: JVC
Price: £44.95
Players: 1-2
Genre: BOXING SIM



sona. Rather oddly the *Victory Boxing* series is a mixed boxing tournament, so men and women get to hit each other without even being married. First, then, you must choose your sex. This is relatively unimportant, as the girlies are just as tough as the guys. Next you must choose whether your personal pugilist is either left or right handed. This is important, as it means either your left handed attacks or right handed attacks will be stronger. Then you must choose your boxers weight group, out of bantam, feather, light, welter, middle and heavy weight. Less importantly, you can choose your boxer's appearance out of ten different choices, on this screen you can also alter their height and weight, and the colour of their shorts. Finally you can alter their speed, power and stamina levels. However, if you move one of these levels up, the other two move down a bit, so you have to do a bit of fiddling to get a balance you're happy with. Once you have passed this screen, you are ready to meet the lovely Edward King, your aforementioned manager. He takes time out between sucking on his cigar to introduce himself and explain how the *Victory*

Boxing tournament works. There are a total of thirty seeded boxers, the top bloke (or bird) being the reigning champion. Boxers are obliged to fight each other, and if a low seeded boxer beats a higher seeded boxer they swap places. Of course, it is hard for the lower seeded boxers to get fights with a quite high seeded one, so to progress up the ladder is usually quite slow. To start with your boxer is a bit rubbish to say the least. Not very skilled, and with little experience, your first few fights are likely to end with you unconscious and missing several

THE BOXERS ATTEMPT TO STARE EACH OTHER OUT BEFORE THE MATCH ACTUALLY BEGINS.

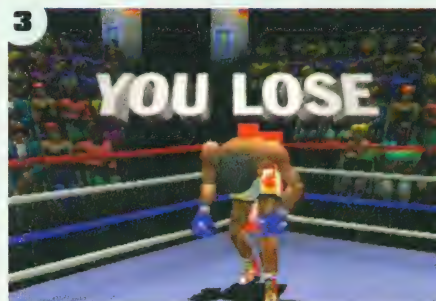


(LEFT) HURRAH! VICTORY AT LAST. SAMPLE THE SOUR TASTE OF DEFEAT, OH RUBBISH ONE.



DOCTOR FUNK'S ODYSSEY

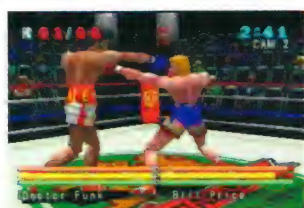
The fighter I created for myself was the iconoclastic Doctor Funk (what else could you call my imposingly tall afro and sideburn sporter?). After a shaky start, he reached a fairly high position in the twenties. Sadly due to a poor choice of fights, he suffered a terrible losing streak, and got knocked back down to near the bottom of the ladder. However, after being visited by a giant cartoon tiger he managed to start winning again, and reached the dizzy heights of the low teens. He was then challenged by the number two fighter, and took up the challenge without hesitation. Sadly, he was outclassed by the near-champ, and after his defeat he lapsed into depression and a succession of even more humiliating defeats. Never mind, Doctor Funk. There's always the opportunity for a comeback.



(1-3) OH DEAR, OH DEAR, OH DEAR. DOCTOR FUNK IS BEATEN OVER AND OVER AGAIN. HE COULD HAVE BEEN A CONTENDER I TELL YOU.



... into him



his name was...) tells you how to do some of the more advanced moves. These are the closest you'll get to the special moves that are so prevalent in other beat 'em ups, and they are just as handy. They are mostly extra powerful or quick punches, and are usually accessed by pushing the joypad in a certain direction and pressing the correct punch button.

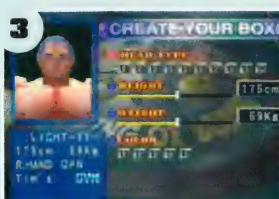
Being Like a Boxer
Bouts take place over varying numbers of rounds, ranging

though you may often feel you need to.

When you've got the hang of the controls, obtained a few new moves, and got a quite skilled boxer, you can make a serious attempt to reach the top. To be successful you should only pick fights with boxers you are capable of beating. After you have fought a few placed boxer you are obliged to let a lower seeded boxer have a pop at your position. If you lose your manager gets a little upset. There are a few game plots (such as boxers turning out to be the brothers of previous boxers and wanting to avenge their defeats, old boxers retiring and new boxers joining), and it'll take you a fair old while to get the *Victory Boxing* special winner's belt.

BUILD A BETTER BOXER

Here is the boxer creation screen. With all the options you can make almost any boxing bloke or bird. Your own personal gym can have a total of six boxers, so now you can see just how well your own Emma Forbes, Father Ted, Jim Bowen, Michael Portillo, Suzanne Charlton and and Ulrika Jonsson would do in the ring.



teeth. However, the more you train, the better you boxer gets. Before each match you can assign various exercises for your boxer to do. The first increases your speed, the second your power, and the third your stamina. However, as when you pick your boxer, increase one of these bars and the other two fall. Using each exercise in moderation is the key to building the perfect puncher.

Victory Boxing's controls are more complex than you might imagine. The joypad is used to rotate your boxer around the ring and move towards and away from your opponent. The pad's square, circle, cross and triangle buttons are used for left jabs, right jabs and straight punches. Pressing a jab and a straight button at the same time makes your boxer uppercut. The shoulder buttons are used for various guarding and avoiding moves and body blows. This system takes a few fights to get the hang of, but once you do you'll be ducking and diving like an scuba diver who punishes witches.

When you eventually start winning matches, your trainer turns up. "Snake" the hard drinking, one eyed ex-boxer (who bears a striking resemblance to the one-eyed bloke out of *Escape From New York* - Snake I think

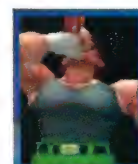
Opinion Well, its the best boxing game on the PlayStation, and it's certainly deeper than your average fighter. Sadly I'd rather have something less deep and a bit faster, but *Victory Boxing* is often quite involving. Not a top game, but well designed and executed nonetheless. **TC**

from four to twelve. Each round lasts three minutes. If a boxer gets knocked to the ground and stays there for over ten seconds, or gets knocked down three times in one round, then trier opponent wins. If the bout runs out of rounds, then the winner is decided on points.

Each participant has three bars, one for damage, one for punch power, and one for health. When you get punched both your health and damage bars decrease. The damage bar goes down much quicker, but it goes back up if you're not punched for a while. If it reaches zero then you are knocked over. If you don't have enough health left to get back up, you're scuppered. The punch power bar goes down as you hit your opponent, and the further down it goes the less damage it does. This means that you can't just lay into your opponent non-stop, even

ROCKY HORROR SHOW

"What's it like to play?" I hear you whine. Well, to begin with, it's not that much fun at all. Your boxer is slow and weak, and the controls are complex. By the time your boxer gets into the low twenties, it can get quite involving particularly if you have a boxer that is quite interesting (see the "Doctor Funk's Odyssey" box). The plot is quite similar to that of a soap opera, and you can be very disappointed if your boxer suffers from a soul-destroying losing streak. Having said that, *Victory Boxing* isn't the deepest game in the world, and the endless fights could potentially get very dull indeed. The fights sometimes feel as if they have been decided before the starting bell has been rung, with some fighters seeming to be oddly good or dodgy. If you choose boxers within your skill range then this doesn't happen so much though. You can be severely limited by your boxer's incompetence, and it takes time to build them up.



MEET "SNAKE", YOUR LOVABLE TRAINER. IN HIS SPARE TIME HE ENJOYS HORSE RIDING, POETRY, AND SWIGGING BELLS FROM THE BOTTLE. AVAILABLE FOR CHILDRENS' PARTIES AND PANTO.



POP Rating...
Graphics : 82
Animation : 83
Sound FX : 86
Music : 87
Lastability : 81
Playability : 79

74

After all these years, Cheech still enjoys a good smoke

Blazing Dragons is a warped medieval adventure spilling from the twisted mind of Monty Python's Terry Jones. Between the wicked, kitty-hurling villains and brain-liquifying puzzles, your grip on reality (not to mention self-respect) will be seriously tested.



Available on Sega Saturn™
and Sony PlayStation™

BLAZING DRAGONS™

CRYSTAL
DYNAMICS™



Check out Crystal Dynamic's cool web site <http://www.crystald.com>

BMG
INTERACTIVE

(RIGHT) *BLACK DAWN* ISN'T THE SORT OF GAME TO UNDERSTATE THINGS. THIS IS A PICTURE OF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DIE. A NASTY BUSINESS INDEED.

Black Dawn

tony Ferrino's first hit was entitled "Love In A Helicopter", but as the Portuguese crooner knew only too well, helicopters are usually used more for war than for love. *Black Dawn* places you – the bloodthirsty PlayStation owner – in charge of a large and heavily armed helicopter gunship. Rather than let you, say, attempt to take out the Spice Girls, you are presented with a bunch of missions, each one harder than the last. These involve lots of shooting things and only slightly less picking things up. There's also a fair amount of dodging too, as the enemy forces are out and about, and the item on the top of their "to do" list is "kill that bloke in the helicopter". *Black Dawn's* plot takes you all over the world, from fighting terrorist forces in New York to dictators armies in the Middle East. The whole game has an enormously jingoistic war-movie atmosphere, and there is enough expensive, high-tech military hardware to keep

even the most bonkers of psychopaths amused for many an hour. So, lots of dangerous things exploding, a fair amount of American army blokes being hard, and you in a massive helicopter with loads of guns. Sounds more than a little similar to *Soviet Strike* doesn't it? When you take on a game that mighty, you are in dangerous territory. Let's see if it can match (or even beat) last month's 92% scoring masterpiece...

FLIGHTY

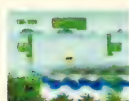
The main difference between *Black Dawn* and *Soviet Strike* is pretty major indeed – whereas that was (an admittedly sophisticated) 2D shooter (with rather posh 3D graphics), this is in real 3D. You can soar high into the sky, skim the ground at high speed, hover menacingly before enemy tanks, and land wherever you please. The enemy vehicles are superbly rendered, with loads of high-res texture mapping and loads going on at some points – it looks truly marvelous. There are multiple views aplenty, most of which have some purpose, and there are some nice light sourcing effects too. The only small complaint is that you can't see too far into the distance, because that would put too much demand on the processor. However, this keeps things flowing smoothly, so that's all right then.

Each of the locations have a very individual atmosphere, and it really does feel different flying around Central Park to the Antarctic. There are lots of little things that make all the difference – little police cars in New York,



solar panels in the snow wastes, all of which can be destroyed. Hurrah for polygon graphics. Nice explosions aplenty. Smoke trails as enemy helicopters crash to the ground, and missiles streak into the distance with impressive plumes of exhaust. All very slick, but not very speedy. *Black Dawn* isn't a wade in, blast everything cerebrally challenged reaction test that, say

Robotron X is. *Black Dawn* is like a game of chess: you must think before you move. Each enemy is deadly, ignore a single helicopter or piece of mobile artillery at your peril, because given half a chance it will blow you out of the sky. Enemy bullets zoom towards you at terrifying speed, and enemy missiles lock on with grim tenacity. The only way to escape is to run away very quickly, but if



Release : TBA
Company : VIRGIN
Price : £44.95
Players : 1
Genre : SHOOT 'EM UP

THIS SEQUENCE SHOWS THE CHASING AND DEATH OF AN ENEMY HELICOPTER BY THE PLAYER. HERE YOU CAN SEE THE TRULY GORGEOUS TEXTURE MAPPED GRAPHICS, NICE LIGHTING EFFECTS, AND IMPRESSIVE SMOKE AND EXPLOSION EFFECTS. VERY CLEVER.





you haven't prepared properly, you will just run into another enemy ambush. Very tricky. So how do you deal with lots of heavily armed opponents such as these? Simple: you use the one thing you've got more of. Your mind.

ALIVE GAMES

At first *Black Dawn* seems impossible. Thrust into an unforgiving world of hurt, mostly on your own, with an army of blood thirsty commies/fascists/Rotarians on your case. Of course at first everyone just ploughs in. How hard can it be to take them all on? Very, as it turns out. Within a few seconds of your frenzied assault you will be attacked on all sides, and there's no way out. Trying your missiles, you down a few of your assailants. Making use of the newly cre-

ated gap in their lines, you make a break for it. At top speed you sail past the remaining vehicles. Phew. Safe at last.

Sadly not. The enemies give chase. More enemies appear on the horizon, your missiles run out, and you die swiftly. How different things could have been. As some very clever bloke once said, "regret is an inevitable consequence of life". However, in *Black Dawn*, you get another chance. Infinite chances in fact. Your supply of lives is never ending, which is a good thing, as it'll take a good few goes before you

A PLANE FLIES OVER YOUR CHOPPER. DISPENSE A RIGHTEOUSLY HUMILIATING DEATH UNTO HIM.



WISH YOU WERE HERE

Your helicopter piloting escapades take you all over the place. Starting off in the (relatively) pleasant New York, proceeding through South America, the Antarctic, the Middle East, and then (and as far as we got) Asia.

SOUTH AMERICA



QUITE SCENIC AND PLEASANT REALLY. IF IT WASN'T FOR THE CRAZED REVOLUTIONARIES TRYING TO MAKE YOU DIE IT WOULD BE RATHER TRANQUIL. LOTS OF LITTLE ISLANDS AND SOME SNOWY AREAS.

NORTH AMERICA



HERE WE ARE IN NEW YORK'S CENTRAL PARK. TODAY THERE ISN'T A MUGGER IN SIGHT, BUT THAT'S PROBABLY DUE TO THE HUGE TERRORIST ONSLAUGHT THAT HAS GOT THE ENTIRE NATIONAL GUARD AND POLICE FORCE TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE.

ANTARCTIC



VERY COLD AND BARREN, THE ANTARCTIC ISN'T MUCH FUN AT THE BEST OF TIMES. WITH ENEMY HOVERCRAFT AND GUNSHIPS ZOOMING ALL OVER THE PLACE IT'S EVEN WORSE, SO WATCH IT. LOTS OF THING TO BLOW UP HERE.

MIDDLE EAST



IT'S NIGHT TIME IN THE MIDDLE EAST, BUT ALL YOUR ARMY COHORTS ARE HERE TO GIVE YOU A HAND. YOUR VISION ISN'T THAT GOOD (DUE TO THE DARKNESS) THOUGH, SO YOU HAVE TO BE EVEN MORE CAREFUL THAN USUAL ON THIS PARTICULAR ZONE.

ASIA



THE NORMALLY PLACID PADDY FIELDS ARE NOW A DANGEROUS PLACE TO STAND WITH A BIG HAT ON. NICE TERRACING EFFECTS ON SOME PARTS OF THE LANDSCAPE, AND SOME LOVELY SLOW FLOWING RIVERS.





crack *Black Dawn's* secret. Seeing as we're so nice, we'll tell you it now: stealth.

At the start of each level you are relatively safe. It is best to stay that way. This can be achieved by advancing slowly, taking out each enemy as efficiently as possible. The least attention you can attract the better. Often a mission will involve picking up some hostages, or collecting some items. The best tactic in these situations is to

lead the enemy away from the pickup area to avoid unwanted casualties or damage. Other missions require you to destroy a number of enemy targets. Leading a few stragglers away at a time is the best advised tactic here, as there are so many entering the fray would be suicide.

MANIPULATION

Another aspect of *Black Dawn* that takes time to perfect is the control system. As you might imagine, flying a complex military huey with just a PlayStation pad is tricky to say the least. Your chopper's altitude is fixed, with left and right on the Dpad used

DON'T SHOOT! AAAGH!

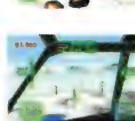
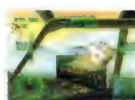
On most levels there are vehicles roving about that are on your side. You can tell because as you get them in your sights the world "friendly" flashes up. Nevertheless, you can still destroy them whilst simultaneously recreating controversial (a few years ago) "friendly fire" incidents.



for turning around, and up and down used to aim your cannon. Holding down L2 and pressing up or down changes your altitude, useful for negotiating the undulating landscape. You can also strafe to the left and right, and move backwards and forwards. There are two fire buttons, one for your cannon (which comes complete with an unlimited supply of bullets), and the other for missiles, rockets and bombs. The missiles lock on to a target (by pressing R2), and when unleashed they chase after it till they get it. Or blow up. The rockets and bombs are unguided, and as such are very difficult to aim. Extra supplies of ammo are dropped occasionally by destroyed opponents, as well as other power-ups including cannon upgrades and a wingman, who helps you complete your tasks (until he kicks the bucket).

On most levels you are not alone. There are often several friendly helicopters, tanks or jets that do their best to

Opinion *Black Dawn* is an interesting combination of the *Agile Warrior* and *Soviet Strike* styles, who's only real competition is *Thunderhawk 2*. If you are after a slightly more thought provoking (but still fearsomely tricky and demanding) shooter then *Black Dawn* may well turn you on. Maybe a little limited in the long run, though. TC



(LEFT) MORE BEAUTIFUL POLYGON ANTICS. AIRCRAFT SWOOP ALL OVER THE PLACE, AND THE HELICOPTERS ENJOY HUNTING IN PACKS.



aid you. These have their own intelligence, and (especially in the Middle East level) can be very handy when the enemy get too much. Which they do regularly. You see, even on the easiest setting, *Black Dawn* is very tough indeed. So far I have played it to death on the "easy" setting, and I still can't get past the forth level.

DIFFERENT CLASS.

So. *Black Dawn* is an impressive, intelligent, and undeniably tricky helicopter based shoot 'em up. Playing it is undeniably similar to having a go on one of EA's *Strike* games – but in 3D. However, despite everything it has going for it, it still can't match *Soviet Strike*. That game has more variety between the levels, more variation in takes that have to be completed, and a more coherent plot. *Black Dawn* is still undeniably a great game in it's own right, so even if I was laying out the cash I'd plump for *Soviet Strike*, the discerning shoot 'em up



enthusiast may want both games for his or her collection. *Black Dawn* has more air to air combat, and feels more like a proper simulator, so it should also find fans who aren't interested in *Soviet Strike*. In conclusion: *Black Dawn* is a game for the more experienced heli-game fan, who may even prefer it to *Soviet Strike*.

PSP RATING...

Graphics : 88
Animation : 84
Sound FX : 78
Music : 79
Lastability : 72
Playability : 80

85

HARD CORE

4x4

**OFF ROADING-
IT'S A DIRTY GAME
BUT YOU'VE GOT TO PLAY IT!**



IT'S DIRTY AND DANGEROUS...

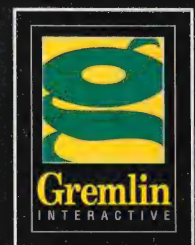
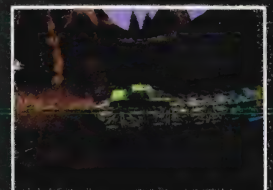
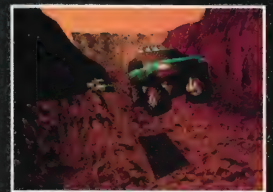
...OPPONENTS DON'T CARE
HOW THEY FORCE YOU OFF...

...THE ADRENALIN PUMPS AS
YOU BATTLE AGAINST SIX OF THE
DIRTIEST OFF-ROAD TERRAINS...

...THE SOUNDTRACK THUMPS
AS YOU SWEAT AND SLIDE
THROUGH IMPOSSIBLE TURNS
AND AXLE-BUSTING DROPS...

...ONLY EXTREME SKILL AND
CONCENTRATION CAN KEEP
YOU IN THE GAME NOW...

...BECAUSE YOU'RE HAVING
THE TOUGHEST, DIRTIEST
EXPERIENCE OF YOUR LIFE.



DON'T BE AFRAID OF THIS FANGED NASTY, HE'S EASILY ELIMINATED USING EITHER THE PHASE REPEATER OR THE PSIONIC BLAST SKILL.



Disruptor



uelle surprise, surely not another *Doom* clone? Ha, it isn't! *Disruptor* has no rivers of blood, there isn't a single horned demon in sight and Satan has obviously taken a break from terrorising us mere mortals because there's no severed goat's heads

hastily scrawled pentagrams. It has got guns though. Lots of them in fact, some so big they make the BFG look embarrassingly feeble in comparison.

Still, in the future even laser rifles are old hat – powers of the mind have superseded the archaic plasma gun, dazzling psychic blasts and brain drains poring more powerful than any conventional weapon. It's lucky then, that as a LightStormer marine you're pretty smart and can reduce an enemy to a mindless vegetable just by

thinking. With this sort of power the possibilities are endless. Massive electrical storms would strike as the result of inattentive day-dreaming, and naff afternoon quiz shows will never be bor-

ing again. Imagine the look on Bob Holness' face as, after asking what 'BB' was a popular seventies fox glove puppet whose catchphrase was 'Boom, boom', he's fried alive by lethal brain-waves!

Release : NOVEMBER '96

Company : INTERPLAY

Price : £44.99

Players : 1

Genre : SHOOT 'EM UP



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Forget the weedy pistol and archaic shotgun from *Doom*, *Disruptor* boasts an impressive array of weapons, from standard issue pistols to monster weapons like the all-powerful Plasma Lance. However, conventional weapons pales into insignificance compared to the psychic ability of the LightStormer most of which can toast a gameshow host in seconds.

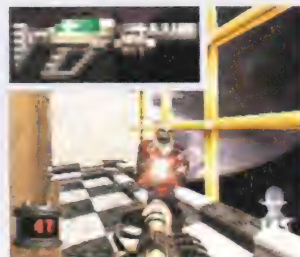
18MM AUTO

A fully-automatic version of the standard 18mm pistol, this weapon really eats up ammunition but is extremely effective against the weaker alien enemies.



PHASE RIFLE

A semi-automatic laser rifle that is pretty powerful but slow to reload. Uses two energy cell types: standard green batteries and the red, high-powered cells.



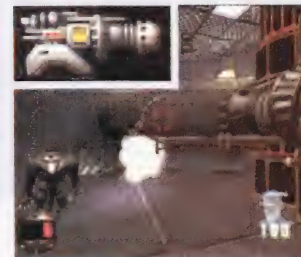
PHASE REPEATER

A rapid-firing variant of the Phase Rifle. Spitting a wide spray of fire from its three barrels, the Phase Repeater is perfect for engaging more than one enemy at once.



LOCKON CANNON

A monster blaster that straps over your shoulder, the Lockon Cannon automatically targets an enemy and, when fired, launches an explosive pods that homes in on them.



PLASMA LANCE

Another single shot weapon, the Plasma Lance is the futuristic equivalent of a flamethrower, unleashing a lethal stream of energy that lasts for just a few seconds.



SHOCK

The least powerful psychic ability, Shock is a short-range attack will fry the brain of any hapless enemy that wanders too close. Uses 5 energy points per blast.



BLAST

A more powerful version of the Shock attack, fire a mind Blast at an enemy and they explode in a flash of light, leaving behind psychic orbs to restore lost energy.



DRAIN

Casting Drain unleashes energy orbs that home in on a target and slowly drain its energy. Once destroyed, the balls can then be collected to restore lost psychic energy.



Seriously though, *Disruptor* is no mindless blast, and isn't as straightforward as wading knee deep in gore, fragging mutant zombies from the bowels of Hades. Admittedly, scooping up ammo cartridges and ripping through alien nasties is a sizable chunk of *Disruptor*'s meaty gameplay, but simple puzzles and complex level designs give depth to what is essentially a conceptually simple game.

FROM ROOKIE TO ROCK HARD

The aim of the game is simple. As a rookie LightStormer marine the objective is to first pass through the training missions before going on to tackle the tougher field assignments. It's not quite that simple though, and even the initial introductory tests prove challenging. Rather than harmless simulations, the six training runs are filled with enemies that fire real bullets and are therefore just as dangerous as the combat missions. They serve to introduce the player to all the various aspects of *Disruptor*, unveiling a handful of the many weapons available and even presents some of the



psychic skills that appear later in the game.

But for best part of the training missions the player will be learning to quickly explore the complex levels while encountering as little alien resistance as possible. In terms of the control system *Disruptor* is very similar to *Doom*, and with a little practice moving through the weird alien worlds while sidestepping to avoid incoming fire soon becomes second nature. However, *Disruptor* offers greater freedom of movement as the



SOME OF THE LATER LEVELS LOOK SMART. ENEMY TROOPS LURK DEEP WITHIN THE MINES, HOPPING FROM ONE LEDGE TO ANOTHER TO AVOID THE BURNING LAVA.

Opinion Graphically spectacular thanks to an advanced 3D engine and refreshingly creative level design, *Disruptor*'s polished presentation is complemented by engrossing gameplay that will challenge and excite. The FMV sequences are pitifully dire though, and while *Disruptor* is a more than competent blast that is both graphically varied and technically superb, it lacks the originality and surprises that would otherwise make this a classic. AS

LightStormer has the ability to jump, leaping over enemies to conserve ammunition, jumping out of pits filled with lethal toxins, or simply climbing a ledge to reach a previously hidden section of a level.

BATTLE ON THE PLANETS

While it's all very easy to navigate the cavernous worlds, it's sometimes gets a bit tricky during a heated fire fight. Unlike the relatively flat stages in *Doom*, the levels in *Disruptor* are completely 3D. Walkways stretch across vast open chambers, bridges span pools of toxic waste and corridors tunnel through rock walls, crossing underneath one another thus making each location a true 3D environment.

Better still is the variety, *Disruptor* boasts 13 levels, no two of which look the same. The metropolis is an urban jungle, an angular hell-hole constructed of steel pillars and moulded plastic, and is a stark contrast to the alien mines – a claustrophobic network of tunnels dug through the hard rock of some distant moon. The surface of what could only be Mars provides



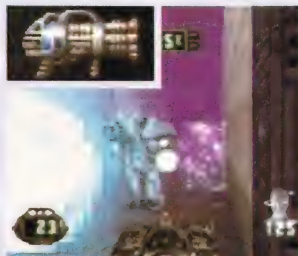
AM BLASTER

Disruptor's equivalent of the shotgun in *Doom*. The AM blaster is pretty slow to reload, but is superb at close range. It loses power over long distances though.



AM CYCLONE

Using the same energy packs as the AM Blaster, the accurate Cyclone fires a constant stream of plasma bolts that will tear through even the toughest enemy.



ZODIAC

The first of the two one-shot weapons available, when activated the Zodiac explodes in a blinding flash of light, damaging anything in the immediate area.



HEAL

The effects of the Heal ability are pretty self explanatory really – it's the psychic equivalent of Savlon cream and a Band Aid. It saps a lot of psionic energy though.



SHIELD

A defensive skill rather than an all-out attack, raising a psychic Shield will temporarily limit the damage sustained from an enemy assault. The screen goes green too.



TERABLAST

The last skill to learn and therefore the most energy intensive Terablast is another mind blast, used to destroy enemies lurking behind walls and locked doors.





the setting for yet another mission, where floating nasties chew on the bloody corpses of previous adventurers and fanged monsters lurk underground, waiting to feed on your psychic energy.

The game isn't restrained to the boundaries of the material world either. A weird psychedelic dream-scape haunted by nightmarish creatures crops up later in the game, and is a world where conventional weapons have no use – players must rely on the powers of the mind to fight off the indigenuous lifeforms.

MINE OVER MATTER

But while the levels are intricately designed and provide an exciting, varied battlefield, the enemies aren't quite so impressive. Ranging from the predictable goggle-eyed alien to thick-skinned mercenaries and towering robots, the opposition

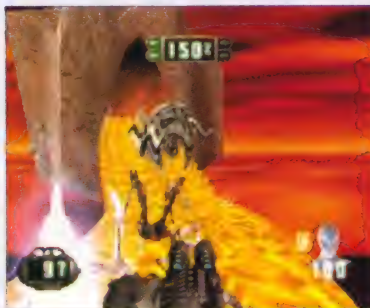
appears in many forms. Most are poorly animated though, walking stiff-limbed and awkwardly raising their guns to fire. They have an almost flat feel to them too, and are 2D bitmaps rather than proper 3D objects. The enemies are therefore unconvincing, although this is a problem that is combated to some extent because the enemy sprites have a feeling of solidity – like *Doom* they feel as though they're actually attacking you, and satisfyingly fly off their feet before slumping to the ground after a direct hit in the chest by the meaty AM Blaster.

Of course, the aliens are just cannon fodder anyway, and simply serve as targets at which to fire one of many weapons which are available. Initially limited to a pathetic hand pistol, heftier guns are scattered throughout each level, along with an assortment of ammo clips and health-restoring medi-kits. Ammunition is in relatively short supply though, which is where psionic powers become extremely useful.

They are essentially a secondary means of attack, burning the enemy in a storm of mental energy rather than pumping them full of lead. Psionics can also be used to heal and also to form a defensive shield, but replenished used psychic energy is more difficult than grabbing another ammo clip and there-

WORLDS APART

Although *Disruptor* doesn't have the adrenaline rush offered by *Doom*, it certainly looks a lot better. This is largely due to the levels, which prove extremely varied and are also true 3D environments as opposed to the two-dimensional virtual reality of *id's* hallowed classic. The LightStormers trek from the blistering surface of Mars to a distant ice moon, before being faced with the uphill struggle of escaping from an alien stronghold.

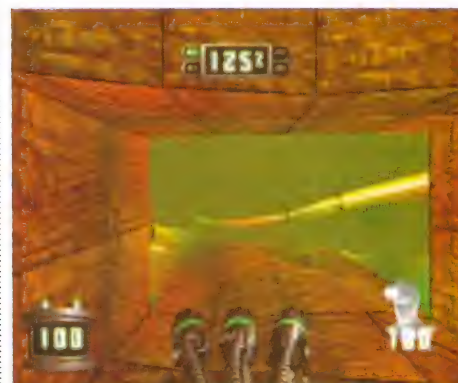


fore these mental abilities really should be saved for dire emergencies.

FMV LATPOCITY

Before the start of each mission players must sit through brief FMV sequences which carry along the plot of the game. Detailing the progress of the rookie LightStormer as he completes the training missions and ventures in the real world of the intergalactic marine corps, although the cutscenes contain vital mission information they are often annoying. The standard of acting is unsurprisingly pretty poor, but the sets and low-budget props make the FMV even more unconvincing – it's hard not to laugh as the marine steps inside a teleporter which looks strangely like a Blue Peter bodge-job, with a couple of painted shoe boxes and toilet rolls tubes glued together with sticky-backed plastic.

FMV clips aside though, *Disruptor* is a surprisingly good first-person perspective shoot 'em up. Technically superior (although not quick to so frantic) to *Doom*, the game boasts an exceptional 3D engine that moves the intricately designed levels with speed and fluidity. The character sprites fail to match the quality of the



(ABOVE) ONE OF THE FEW WAYS OF REPLENISHING LOST PSYCHIC ENERGY IS TO STEP INSIDE ONE OF THESE POWER CHAMBERS.

engine though, although this minor gripe is overshadowed by the gameplay which is both challenging and exciting. By no means a doom beater, but certainly a worthy alternative.

POP RATING...

Graphics : 87
Animation : 78
Sound FX : 84
Music : 79
Lastability : 85
Playability : 88

86

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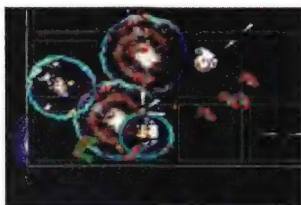
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Robotron-X

THESE TWO PICTURES SHOW THE NORMAL AND OVERHEAD VIEWS. THE NORMAL ONE LOOKS PRETTIER, BUT THE OVERHEAD ONE GIVES YOU A BETTER TACTICAL VIEW.



Robotron was recently featured on the William's Arcade Classics compilation, converted straight from the arcade original. This version comes on its own, but it's been put through special machines which have enhanced the graphics, music, sound-effects, and gameplay. Even with these changes, can Robotron-X compete with today's complex hi-tech blasters?

The plot is more than a little simplistic: Aliens invade, and you have to save everyone. This involves run-



ning about a scrolling square level, shooting the monsters whilst trying to grab and save as many humans as you can. Two hundred times. Your character can walk and shoot in eight directions, controlled by the Dpad and buttons respectively. For example, you can walk down the screen and simultaneously shoot diagonally up and right by pressing down on the Dpad and the triangle and circle buttons. There are no other controls.

On certain levels power-ups appear, and if you collect them you can obtain bonuses such as two way front and back fire, three way spread fire, a flame thrower, an extra life, shields, or even three way fire and mines, which drop behind you whenever you fire. The shield and the extra weapons run out after a set time.

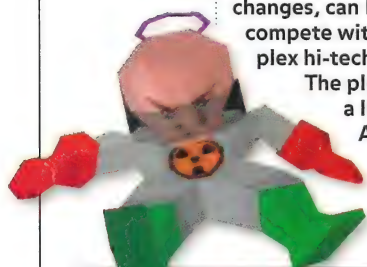
There are several varieties of monster that you encounter throughout the levels. The most common are the basic robots, who can be killed with a single shot.



There are also slower indestructible robots, evil brains, tanks and spheroids who shoot at you, and various background obstacles that cost you a life if you accidentally bump into them.

IS THAT IT?

Yes. That is all that happens. On later levels some of the monsters evolve and become more dangerous, and some of the levels have different patterned backgrounds or are different shapes, but it is very repetitive. There are lev-



Release : NOVEMBER '96
Company : GT INTERACTIVE
Price : £44.95
Players : 1-2
Genre : SHOOT 'EM UP

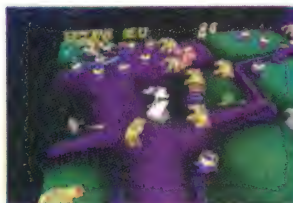


Try it before

Rent any latest release from just

els where the robots are very fast indeed, or where there are just loads and loads of baddies, but the gameplay is more or less exactly the same all the way through. The polygon graphics, whilst not dreadful, are functional (will the occasional nice animation of a robot beating you to death), and when using the overhead camera (the best one for getting a balanced view of the action) it looks very old fashioned indeed. Which it is, really.

You can customise the difficulty of the game (skill level, number of lives, starting level, number of points you need to score before you get an extra life), and there is a simultaneous two-player mode. Everything works exactly as it should, and the action is fast and furious. The



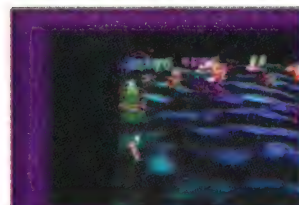
options are well presented, with many little graphical touches to give everything a friendly feel. The only time things get frustrating is when some of the tougher aliens (eg the homing missile firing tanks) are in great numbers, or when more and more aliens just keep appearing, and nothing interesting happens.



challenge for everyone, and there is such an abundance of levels that you can play it for ages. The big question is whether you will want to or not. Chances are you will become very bored by about level 40, and I can't see anyone but the most ardent Robotron fan playing all two hundred levels. *Robotron X* will be adored by this sort of person, but I would recommend everyone else wait around for *Reloaded*, which will hopefully combine frantic shooting action with varied levels and stunning graphics.

BUT IS IT ANY GOOD?

Well, *Robotron X* is high speed simplistic shoot 'em up action that doesn't purport to be anything else. As you can customise the difficulty level there is enough chal-



MONSTER MUNCH

THERE ARE ONLY A FEW TYPES OF MONSTER IN *ROBOTRON X*, BUT AS YOU PLOW THROUGH THE LEVELS THEY EVOLVE AND TURN FROM WET BLANKETS INTO VERY DRY BLANKETS INDEED. OBSERVE THEM:

BLOCK

THESE OBSTACLES JUST SIT THERE. TOUCH THEM AND YOU DIE HORRIBLY. ON SOME LEVELS THERE CAN BE QUITE A FEW.



BOX

THESE ARE THE CONTAINERS THAT THE TANKS COME IN. THEY FLOAT ABOUT ALL OVER THE PLACE, THEN DROP THEIR LOAD.



TANK

AGH! VERY TOUGH. ON LATER LEVELS YOU GET TANKS WHICH FIRE HOMING MISSILES AND THE LIKE, SO WATCH OUT.



INDESTRUCTIBLE

A SLOW MOVING ROBOT THAT JUST REFUSES TO DIE. YOUR BULLETS BOUNCE, AND THEY MARCH TOWARDS YOU UNFAZED.



ROBOT

THE MOST COMMON BADDIE, THESE ROBOTS ARE WEAK BUT THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF THEM. THEY CAN GET VERY FAST



SPHEROID

THESE CIRCULAR MONSTERS TURN INTO WEIRD SATELLITE SHAPED DEATH DEALERS IF YOU LEAVE THEM FOR LONG ENOUGH. DON'T.



BRAIN

THE MOST EVIL OF ALL THE BADDIES, THESE BRAINS FIRE HOMING LAZERS THAT CHASE YOU, AND THEN THEY HIDE. KILL THEM.



Opinion *Robotron X* is essentially fast shooting action taken to it's rawest. There are a few power-ups and special monsters, but for most of the time it is simple mindless run and shoot shenanigans. This is fine if you are not after something that will keep your attention for a long time, but if you want something a bit deeper I would recommend waiting for something like *Reloaded*.

TC

PSP RATING...

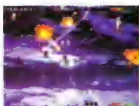
Graphics : 75
Animation : 72
Sound FX : 66
Music : 78
Lastability : 59
Playability : 81

66

you buy it.
£3.49 for three evenings

BLOCKBUSTER VIDEO

(BOTTOM)
ONE OF X2'S
MINI-BOSSSES.
HE IS MADE
MORE DIFFI-
CULT TO
DEFEAT BY THE
DEADLY
SCENERY BEING
NEAR IMPOSS-
IBLE TO DISTIN-
GUISH FROM
THE BACK-
GROUND.



NICE ARSENAL

Here are some of the more useful weapons you can pick up in X2.



PINK LASER

LOOKING MORE LIKE A PAIR OF "SWIMMERS", THESE ARE THE FIRST DECENT LASERS YOU GET. QUITE TOUGH.



SMART BOMB

YOU HAVE SOME OF THESE TO START WITH, RELEASING THEM CAUSES A LARGE AMOUNT OF DAMAGE TO EVERYTHING.



RIPPLE LASER

ONE OF THE BEST WEAPONS, THIS THING IS A BIT LIKE A LONG BLUE FLAME-THROWER. A NECESSITY FOR LATER LEVELS.



GREEN WAVE LASER

THIS ONE NOT ONLY FANS OUT ATTRACTIVELY, BUT IF YOU GET ENOUGH POWER-UPS IT SHOOTS OUT DIAGONAL WAVES TOO.



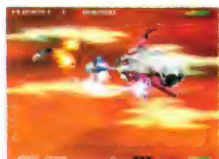
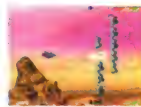
PURPLE BULLETS

IT MAY NOT LOOK LIKE MUCH, BUT THIS WEAPON HAS GOT IT WHERE IT COUNTS. IT'S RAPID FIRE AND PACKS A MEAN PUNCH.



X2

Oddly enough there haven't been that many horizontally (or vertically) scrolling shoot 'em ups on the PlayStation. Now we have X2, the sequel to the Amiga game *Project X*. In that you had to kill some aliens, whilst not getting killed back. Now all those aliens have been killed, you have to kill some more. Your spaceship flies from left to right (and now also from up to down and down to up) using its special weapons to defeat the oncoming hordes of the enemy space fleet. Colliding with enemies, bullets or scenery is rewarded with energy loss. If you get rewarded too much you die, and X2 is extremely rewarding. There are usually about



four score and twenty aliens on the screen at one time, all gunning for your diminutive

little spaceship and large chunks of scenery that get in your way. It's not just hard – it's very hard. To aid you in your quest for victory of the aliens you can pick up extra weapons, varying from more powerful front lasers to homing missiles and the famous (if you read the last month's preview) lighting weapon. These come contained in little capsules that appear when you shoot certain aliens. Each capsule has a picture on it representing the power-up it contains. If you leave the capsule rather than pick it up immediately the picture cycles through all the available power-ups, so you can choose

which extra weapon to pick up.

WAVE-TURN

Dispatching the aliens is a lot tougher than most other shoot 'em ups, because most of them are rock hard, and require an inordinate number of bullets to pierce them before they capitulate and explode. With such a large number of baddies on the screen at the same time it's all you can do to survive until you get some of the previously mentioned extras.

The first level is set in a futuristic Earth city, with lots of search lights and parallax scrolling. You are accosted by various waves of enemy fighters, and also some larger aliens who attack on their own. These guys take even MORE hits to

Release : NOVEMBER '96
Company : TEAM 17/OCEAN
Price : £44.95
Players : 1-2
Genre : SHOOT 'EM UP



kill, and most of them don't leave until you have rendered them non-existent. Thankfully there isn't any scenery that you can crash into on this level, so you can weave about all over the place without too much danger.

The second level introduces a twist – literally – with a vertically scrolling section taking over halfway through the level. The gameplay isn't altered that much by the transition between horizontal and vertical, and it would have been nice to see some variation. This level also has some deadly scenery and bits where you have to blow some boulders up before you can proceed – nasty if you are stuck with a weak weapon. The other levels continue in a similar vein, each one with new monsters.

EXTENSIVE

It looks very nice indeed (apart from the out of place looking player ships), but that is where the good points end. X2 sadly isn't any fun to play. Here's why: The aliens

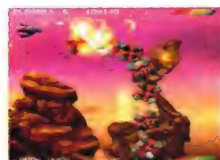
loss is to simply to stay out of their way as much as possible. However, sometimes their attack formations don't allow this because they fill up most of the screen, and if you haven't got a decent weapon you have no choice but to die. Even if you do have a decent weapon chances are at some point you will accidentally pick up an unwanted power-up and get the crappy first on again. More or less all the weapons are useless, the only one that is worth sticking with is the beautiful looking blue laser flamethrower thing, and even that is weedy on the later levels. When you die you drop a power-up icon, and more likely than not the computer will steer you over it when you are resurrected, once again giving you a crap old weapon. Some bosses (most notably the one on the ice world) take an age to defeat, and this involves just dodging their attack patterns and hoping you don't get hit by too many of the million bullets flying all over the place. On some levels, if you choose to fly down the



(LEFT) JUMPING ROBO-SPIDERS ATTEMPT TO MAKE YOUR LIFE DIFFICULT ON THE STRONGHOLD LEVEL OF X2. HERE THE GOODIE SHIP IS UTILISING THE FLAMETHROWER TO CLEAR A PATH THROUGH THE EVIL ALIENS.

Opinion X2 looks great but underneath what looks like a fast moving, exiting shoot 'em up is a dull and confusing waste of time. It is so little fun to play you would not believe. Do not under any circumstances be fooled into the whole idea that this is the game that is going to bring fun and playability back to the PlayStation, as it's just not going to happen.

TC



bullets have a habit of blending into the background meaning that (especially when there is a lot going on) you get killed by something you can't see. Also when, say, you're on level four the deadly scenery has a habit of blending in with the background, so there goes another life or two. The baddies take so many shots to kill, your best bet to avoid energy

wrong path, you crash into an indestructible wall and die, without getting a second chance. There are three ships to choose from, each with a different firepower to speed ratio, but only the strongest one's bullets really do any significant damage.

EXPOSURE

I was so looking forward to X2, but I wasn't expecting it

to be bollocks. The main problem is that it is just no fun to play. Team 17 have failed to grasp what makes a game fun and exiting. Shooting a boss for ten minutes going over the same motions again and again isn't fun, and shooting a line of seemingly indestructible aliens until they inevitably overwhelm and kill you is just infuriating. The two player

mode makes it somewhat more bearable, but I wouldn't introduce any of your friends to X2, because they are likely to stop being your friend after that.

X2 will undoubtedly find its fans, but they are strange people. Why play this, when you could be doing something fun?

PSP RATING...

Graphics : 83

Animation : 75

Sound FX : 72

Music : 80

Lastability : 43

Playability : 61

58

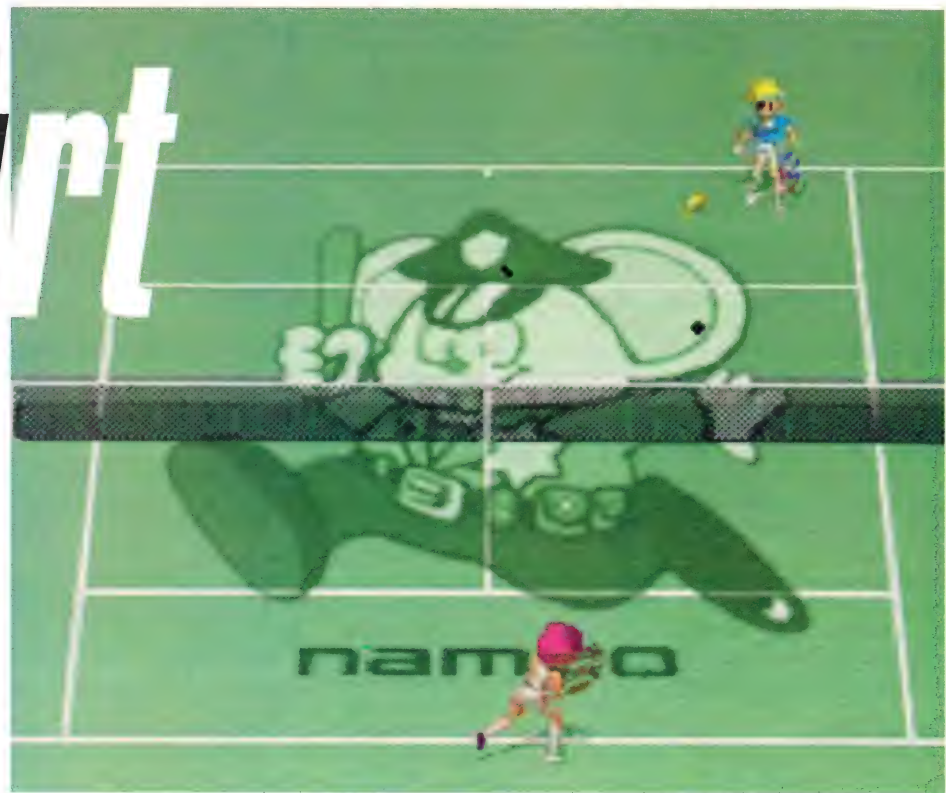
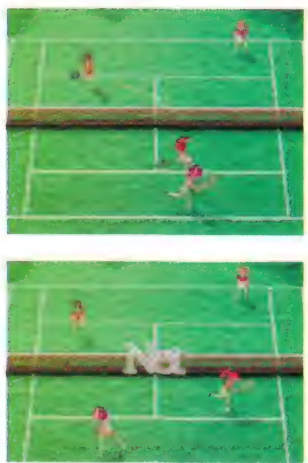
Lumina

OUT NOW



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Smash Court

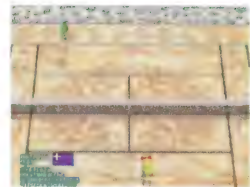
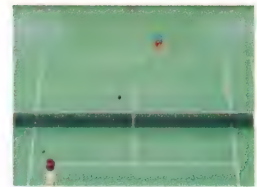


S *Smash Court* is Namco's stab at PlayStation tennis. Already dominating the 3D driving and beat 'em up genres, can Namco be top at tennis too?

This take on the world's favourite cream and strawberries sport is not as realistic and accurate as, say, Ocean's *Break Point*, but it makes up for it by being cute and cuddly, with special moves rather than stats. The players are cute little characters rather than motion captured athletes, and the matches take place in mediæval castles and on desert islands as well as the more usual centre court setting.

Single and double matches are available, and up to four people can join in at one time. For the single player there is a tournament mode, with various difficulty levels accessible by playing through the easier settings.

The whole style of the game is distinctly Japanese, with cute little cartoon



OUT! YOU'LL PROBABLY SEE THAT FLASH UP ON THE SCREEN A LOT OF YOU'RE HALF AS BAD AS I AM.

blokes and birds whacking the ball around with all the strength they can muster. Surprisingly this can be quite hard. *Smash Court* can be fairly quick compared to some of the more sedate tennis sims, relying on reflex based action rather than sophisticated gameplay. The controls are simple, the graphics are simple, the whole thing is a great big pie of simplicity. The question is: does *Smash Tennis* provide us with a tasty tennis pie?

SMASH HITS

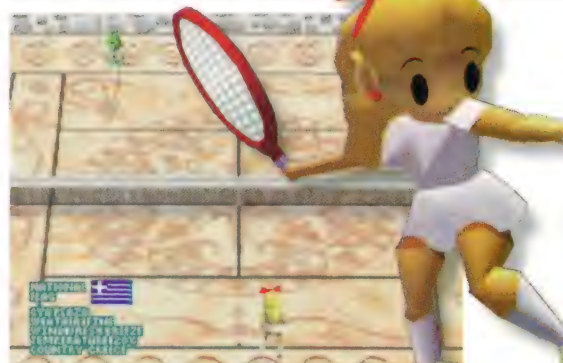
There are four different types of shot, each assigned to a different joy pad button. There are two standard-ish

shots, but also a lob, and a smash. The smash is difficult to time as it takes a while to power-up, but the other shots are fairly easy to pull off. By using these buttons with the Dpad, you can select the area of the court you want to aim the ball at. Serving requires even more accuracy – on your first button press the ball is thrown up into the air, and on the second press your player takes a swipe at it with his racket. If you mess up and miss the ball, it counts as a fault, unlike real tennis. This is just one way in which the traditional tennis rules have been updated for PlayStation

THESE SCREENS SHOW OFF NOT ONLY SMASH COURT'S LOVELY PRESENTATION, BUT THE ACTUAL COURTS THEMSELVES.



Release : IMPORT
Company : NAMCO
Price : IMPORT
Players : 1-4
Genre : SPORTS

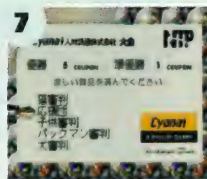
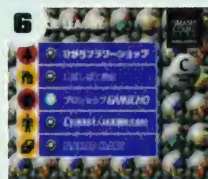
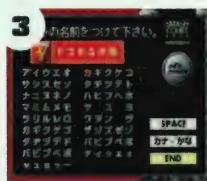
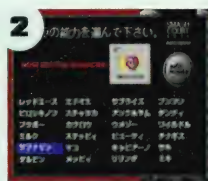




user consumption.

Continuing in the arcade vein, the players have no stats, neither do the players get tired or injured when they're hit by the ball (when this happens the player falls to the floor in pain).

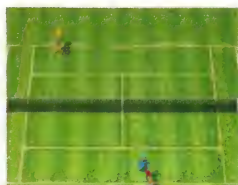
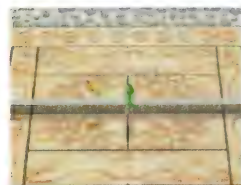
The backgrounds are very pretty indeed but there is nothing exiting on offer. Sure all the characters are textured polygons with properly shaped shadows shooting off in multiple directions, but as the backgrounds themselves



JOIN OUR CLUB

In *Smash Court* you are given the chance to join an exclusive tennis club, no matter how far down the social scale you are or how bad your dress sense. You are invited to input your name, but as I can't read a word of Japanese I have probably entered something like "Necrotising Blancmange Dentist". Ah well. At least you get to choose a cute manga alter-ego with outrageously coloured hair.

The club allows you to compete in one of several tournaments, each with their own sponsors and everything. You get access to the results of all the matches in the club, and you can save all the data to memory. This is important, as to complete a tournament requires you to play a lot of matches. The matches can be shortened in length by changing the number of sets for each match. There are no difficulty levels as such, but the different tournaments appear to be increasing in difficulty. If you are having trouble in this mode then you can practice against your opponent in exhibition mode. You can also edit things and generally fiddle about, but even though it's all very well presented it's not actually much cop.



are bitmapped, there isn't any fancy 3D trickery to speak of – not even zooming in and out. There is some nicely out of focus foreground scenery, which does add a bit of depth to the very flat feel. The locations are nicely done though, playing in Dig Dug Castle or on an island in the middle of a Canadian lake is certainly more exiting than the usual tennis court locations.

However, even the regular style locations have been spiced up with pictures of some of Namco's arcade stars of old. The locations and graphics certainly add some individuality to *Smash Court*, but sadly they haven't both-

ered to include a court in a leisure centre – a great shame.

This game was originally a smash on the SNES, and it hasn't really been updated since its 16-bit appearance. Remember *Super Tennis* on the SNES? Well, this is the PlayStation version. In fact, I found this nowhere near as fun as *Super Tennis*. At some point between the creation of that game and this one the fun has been surgically removed.

IT'S BLISS

Don't get me wrong, *Smash Court* has its moments. However, they aren't the crunchingly tense and exiting

Opinion Sadly *Smash Court*, whilst looking quite nice, just isn't that much fun. Due to the trickiness of the control and the generally slow pace of play, *Smash Court* is just no fun. The doubles option liven things up a little but it's still no great shakes. A great pity indeed. Don't be tempted by *Smash Court* – it may look cute but it's a devil in disguise. TC

moments. This is tennis at it's least involving, and due to the trickiness of the specials and serving most people won't bother to persevere with it.

Things are somewhat improved by the doubles option, where you can let your computer partner do all the tough stuff while you take a few swipes at easy shots. The multiplayer modes improve things further, with no pesky half decent computer players to spoil your fun, the real players can bash the ball all over the place and have a laugh. When you do get a rally going, it's fun, but it's not as much fun as it could be. There seems to be something about PlayStation tennis games that prevents them being good. Perhaps it's the obsession with realism, or the creators insistence in using all that texture mapped, motion captured polygons. However, these

criticisms can't be applied to *Smash Court*. It's something far more fundamental – difficult control and a lack of fun means that this game is only of interest to tennis or manga completeists. A shame, as SNES *Super Tennis* was absolutely marvellous. The curse of no-good PlayStation tennis games continues – when will we see the light at the end of the tunnel? If it gets much worse people may have to actually go outside and do some real sport.



PSP Rating...

Graphics : 79

Animation : 83

Sound FX : 72

Music : 87

Lastability : 67

Playability : 65

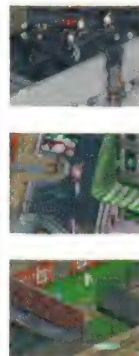
57



GREEN HAIR, BLUE BALLS. WHAT IS IT WITH THE JAPANESE, EXACTLY?



Klawd is just your average feline courier, who gets sucked into a world of crime and violence when he inadvertently uncovers a counterfeiting racket. He discovers that the packages he's paid to deliver contain thousands of dollars in cash, and he proceeds to spend wad. By pure coincidence he visits the same weapon shop as the slightly



HERE'S FIRO IN ALL HIS SIMIAN GLORY. HIS STAINED SHIRT AND ATTRACTIVE TIE ARE TESTAMENT TO THE DEDICATION HE PUTS INTO HIS JOB.



CONTROLLING ME

In *Firo & Klawd* you can customise the controls a great deal more than in other games, including what direction you travel when you press the Dpad. It may sound odd, but some people (probably those brought up on quirky 8-bit isometric adventures) want the Dpad

to make you character travel diagonally when you press up.

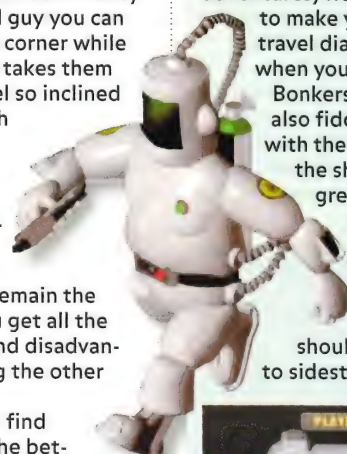
Bonkers! You can also fiddle around with the settings for the shoot /

grenade / jump /

duck buttons, and even more

usefully assign the

shoulder buttons to sidestep or rotate.



deranged cop gorilla Firo, and is caught trying to spend the phony money. Rather than being taken in for questioning, Klawd is deputised by Firo and they both go off in search the Mr Big behind the whole scam.

Firo & Klawd is an isometric arcade shoot 'em up following the exploits of the mismatched partners. Like every cop film ever, they shoot the bad guys, then exchange some abusive banter. Except this time YOU (and optionally a friend) are in control of the action. It's a bit like *Project Overkill*, except with cuter graphics. Firo is armed with an extremely large gun, and Klawd has an extremely pow-

erful catapult at his disposal. Each character can move about in eight directions, as well as also being able to jump, duck and sidestep. However, to compensate for Firo's extremely powerful gun he is a bit slow, whilst Klawd on the other hand has n't got such a powerful weapon but is faster on his feet.

ARTIFICIAL

In the two player mode one player is Firo and the other gets to be Klawd. They both share the same screen so they can't stray too far from each other. Things are the same in the one player mode, except the computer controls the second character, sort of like *Chaos Engine*. They follow you around taking potshots at the bad guys, and they even pick up power-ups and get killed. The computer AI is quite good, but it does-

n't make it's bloke run in shooting madly. Sadly, you have to do the majority of work yourself, but sometimes if you just don't fancy tackling a bad guy you can hide around a corner while the computer takes them out. If you feel so inclined you can switch between the character by tapping the select button. Your number of lives and energy level remain the same, but you get all the advantages and disadvantages of being the other character.

Personally I find Klawd to be the better character, as he's faster and better at dodging the enemy attacks. His feeble weapon isn't very good, but all the power-ups help make up for his lack of ferocity.

CARTOON CAR-NAGE ABOUNDS WHEN FIRO & KLAWD ARE AROUND.



Release : NOVEMBER '96
Company : BMG
Price : £44.95
Players : 1-2
Genre : SHOOT 'EM UP



WATCH OUT – IN FIRO & KLAWD EVEN THE STREETS ARE MINED. WHAT'S MORE, THUGS HANG OUT ON EVERY CORNER. IT'S A GOOD THING OUR HEROS ARE SO HEAVILY ARMED.

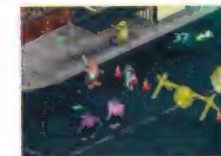


Opinion What could have been a fine game is marred by lack of a save option, and this is going to put an awful lot of people off. However, if you are rock-hard and don't mind going through the motions again and again, then there is lots to recommend *Firo & Klawd* over other games like *Project Overkill* and *Steel Harbinger*. **TC**

As they take to the streets to deal with the vicious criminal scum they can pick up extra weapons like rapid fire ammo, explosive ammo, bouncy fire, triple way fire, homing missiles and grenades. The grenades are launched separately and can be thrown over walls etc. All the other weapons are activated with the regular fire button, so watch out – if you launch a missile into a wall that you happen to be standing too close to you are likely to blow yourself up. You can also meet a chunky end by walking over a land mine (which are all over the place) or being hit by an enemies' rocket, but it is more likely you will be shot or beaten to death. This can be avoided by ducking to the ground so your enemies' assault flies harmlessly over your head. Jumping can be used to avoid attacks but it is more useful for traversing the terrain and reaching previously unattainable heights – literally.

INTELLIGENCE

The point of each level is not only to blow away all the hoodlums you can, but also to find more clues about your perplexing case. This usually involves finding an important character and beating him up or killing him (or perhaps even letting him go). When you have done this you can progress to the next stage, which is usually more of the same. However, some stages involve an Operation Wolf style shoot out, and one, set in the (groan) "Beers" bar, requires you to use fisticuffs rather than firepower to



defeat your enemies. These little diversions combined with the little bits of FMV between each level punctuate the main scrolling and shooting sections quite nicely.

The first few levels are mainly flat, but later levels have huge complicated systems of slopes, treacherously thin platforms and ladders, and are very big and VERY tough. Some of the bad guys on these levels are just too nasty compared to the others, with fast firing machine guns and rocket launcher users. Thankfully there are three difficulty levels, and the two player option is likely to make things a bit less tricky if you and a friend team up. As usual, this makes the game a lot more fun generally, and you can partake in humorous banter with your gaming buddy.

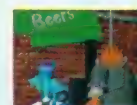
But...
This is the crunch.



There isn't a save game system at all. This means that every time you play you have to go through the WHOLE game to get to the point where you died. It could be a lot more satisfying and enjoyable if you had a password after each level. Without these it seems unlikely that you will see all of the different endings, even on easy mode. This is a shame, as *Firo & Klawd* could have been great rather than just good. As it stands you are likely to become bored going over the same old ground time and time again, which is a terrible, terrible pity. Another game to file under the "Quite good, but think how much better it could be if they had only put this and that in". **Ho-hum.**

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

Because of *Firo & Klawd*'s non-linear nature, at certain points you can choose which path to follow. These lead to separate challenges and eventually one of six different endings. For example, on the first level, you can choose either to use the subway, or go into a bar (I know which I'd choose). If you go into the bar you have to brawl hand to hand with some evil ruffians, but if you choose to ride the train then you have a massive fire fight to guarantee getting a seat. Little bits of FMV keep you updated on what's going on between levels, and each new bit you see reveals more and more of the convoluted plot.



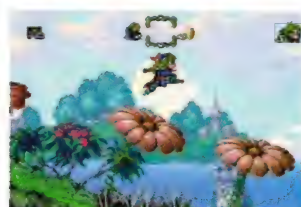
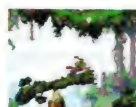
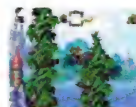
PSP RATING...
Graphics : 87
Animation : 86
Sound FX : 83
Music : 86
Lastability : 69
Playability : 88

82

WATER IS FATAL TO OUR HAPLESS HERO. IF HE FALLS IN, THE PLAYER IS GIVEN ONE CHANCE TO LEAP TO SAFETY, FOLLOWING WHICH HE SINKS TO THE BOTTOM AND A LIFE IS LOST.



Lomax in Lemmingland



The array of games released for the PlayStation are a funny and diverse bunch. Take Formula 1, for example, logic suggests that anyone taking a good look at Psygnosis' masterpiece would take an equally good look at any racing games they have in development and try to bring them to a similar standard. Hmm, Penny Racers suggests otherwise. Now, as Lomax (in

Lemmingland) drops on to the PlayStation, the boot is on the other foot and we suggest Psygnosis treat themselves to a copy of Pandemonium! to help bring them up to date. Lomax's origins date back to a Psygnosis Megadrive title called Flink. In that game, the titular hero traversed a series of platform stages, using a series of spell-related abilities to bypass certain areas, and attacking any baddies that came his way. According to its scenario, an evil wizard had cast a spell across Flink's world, making all the inhabitants turn to the dark side. Take away the Flink character and retitle him Lomax, remove the spells and add a selection of abilities lifted from DMA Design's classic Lemmings release, and substitute the said evil villagers for Lemmings which have been turned bad. All these changes also extend to another bad guy – this time called Evil Ed. Ed has cast his spell over Lemmingland, and now Lomax, under the player's supervision, is the only person who can reverse the spell.

attractive main sprite, and both take place against pretty-looking stages made up of forests and suitably floral ledges. The main similarities are purely aesthetic, however, and while Lomax never really pushes the player, its clever gameplay is constantly evolving and adding new ideas to the levels. For the most part, Lomax is traditional fare with the main sprite running across the said ledges, all of which lead to the exit. Patrolling the levels are the stricken Lemmings who, under Ed's spell, attempt to kill Lomax with two consecutive hits removing one of his three lives. Thankfully, Lomax is equipped with a Tasmanian Devil-style spin attack which deflects their advances and also returns them to normali-

ty – wherein they fly off using an umbrella or a similar method seen in past Lemmings games. Simple stuff, then. Sort of.

SPELL IT OUT

The main element that lifts Lomax apart from the simplistic run and jump efforts of the past is the aforementioned 'spell' system. In a clever nod to the original Lemmings games, pressing the Select button during play



Release: NOVEMBER '96
Company: PSYGNOSIS
Price: £44.95
Players: 1
Genre: PLATFORM

FAMILIAR TERRITORY

If Lomax were to be compared to another PlayStation platformer (aside from Flink, that is), it's closest cousin would be UBI Soft's Rayman. Both games feature an





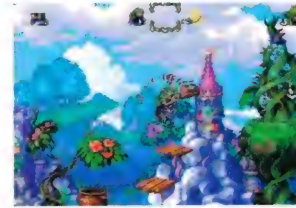
summons a number of icons which circle above Lomax's head. Initially, the coloured icons within these are empty, thus rendering our hero relatively harmless. However, appearing randomly throughout the game are clay pots which are opened by using a spinning attack near them. On doing so, the pots crack open to reveal either a cache of gold coins or a hat. When Lomax is wearing his hat (which also doubles as a weapon to be thrown at enemies), any further pots cracked open endow him with a particular skill used in conjunction with the head-gear. In keeping in line with the assorted Lemmings-related aesthetics, each ability Lomax adds to his hat ties in with those of past games. For example, the build icon allows him to create magical platforms to reach high ledges (and showcases some of the nicer animation touches the game offers), while old favourites like digging also make an appearance alongside new items such as grappling hats which extend a 'tongue' which latches on to nearby objects, and one that allows Lomax to hover. In all, Lomax's hat can cope with six

skills, and the player is weaned into them one by one.

GENIUS AT WORK

The addition of the hats and their respective abilities is a sound one, but one that isn't exploited enough. The first hat appears within the first stage, but before the others are introduced you are given numerous choices to use it. This would be fine if a number of options were available to Lomax, but let's face it if Lomax comes to a dead end where the only conceivable exit is a seemingly impassable platform and all he has to use are the climbing icons, it doesn't take Albert Einstein to work out how to breach the problem. While it can be appreciated that Psygnosis didn't want to overwhelm the player with a load of unfamiliar icons, the addition of one icon at a time is a little tedious, and a more logical system would be for the player to be taken through a sample level which featured a use for each icon.

When Lomax does start to get going, it is an enjoyable but occasionally annoying game. The action tootles along at a fairly sedate pace

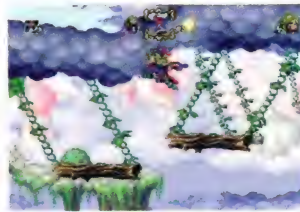


THE HATS LOMAX USES TO EFFECT THE CLIMBING, FIRE-BREATHING, AND OTHER SKILLS ARE COLLECTED BY SPINNING INTO THE MANY POTS THAT GRACE EACH STAGE. FURTHER SUPPLIES OF EACH SKILL ARE FREELY AVAILABLE.

Opinion Lomax is the epitome of PlayStation platform games. It offers no surprises, is a steady and progressive game, and is very attractive to look at. However, in taking no major risks, it also comes across as rather dull, and although the advent of Lomax's spell-casting abilities is a bonus, the implementation is flawed and takes too long to fully integrate with the action. *Pandemonium!* has raised the platform stakes now, and tired fare like this have had their day. SM

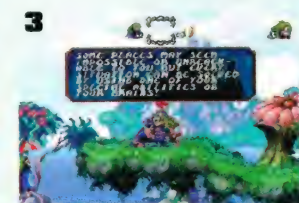
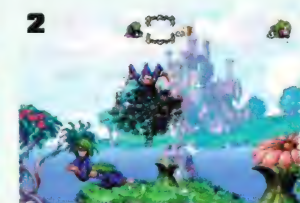
and the rogue Lemmings rarely attack in groups (although their appearance changes throughout the game via disguises) so unless you're off guard the loss of life is easily avoided. Extra danger appears via rocks which tumble across the screen threatening to crush Lomax, but a neat idea of a multi-layer play area allows Lomax to escape by using bridges to cross in and out of the screen. This is typical of *Lomax in Lemmingland*. There are some really nice ideas throughout the game, yet it fails to convince. All the

spiked pits and moving platforms are there, and routinely implemented, but whereas *Pandemonium!* presents them in a fresh light, here they just look dated. The game also veers from sedate to incredibly frustrating with lives lost due to dodgy collision detection which often sees Lomax appearing to fall through a moving ledge, and this sort of problem should have been lost with the loss of the ZX Spectrum.



SANTA'S LITTLE HELPERS

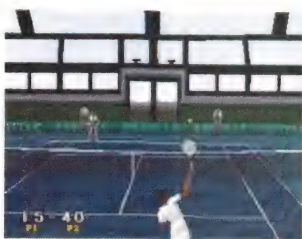
Lomax is assisted throughout the game by strange wizards whose appearance is marked by the materialisation of a floating hat. The hats appear at key stages of the game, and the wizards appear if Lomax jumps up and makes contact with the floating millinery. Each wizard offers a paragraph of special moves, ranging from always wear a hat in key stages, use large barrels to roll safely over spiked pits, and hold down the Dpad to avoid being hit by bombs when walking downhill. Unlike the use of spells, however, the advice doesn't always come into play when you'd expect it to, but allows players to bypass some stages easier with the benefit of hindsight.



Graphics : 78
Animation : 67
Sound FX : 71
Music : 73
Lastability : 68
Playability : 72

70

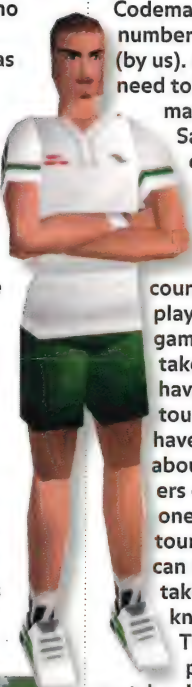
THIS BLUE THEMED INDOOR COURT IS ONE OF THE MOST PLEASANT TO PLAY ON, IT HAS A LOVELY, TRANQUIL AMBIENCE.



Break Point



Tennis: no other game has quite the grace and elegance of this most genteel of sports. An ancient game that has developed over the centuries into lawn or "real" tennis, can it be of interest to the young hip and trendy PlayStation owner? Ocean think so. In fact, they are so sure that they are about to release *Point Break*, their very own PlayStation tennis game. However, Pete Sampras is seeded as the number one tennis player, and *Pete Sampras Tennis* by



Codemasters is seeded the number one tennis game (by us). *Break Point* will need to be pretty blooming marvellous to beat Sampras at quite literally his own game.

Break Point used solid polygon characters overlaid on a texture mapped court. You can choose to play a game of singles, a game of doubles, partake in a special cup, have a multiplayer tournament, or simply have a practice knock about. Up to four players can participate at one time, but in the tournament mode you can have eight people taking turns to try and knock each other out. The cup mode takes place over sixteen

matches in four different countries, and gets progressively harder. There are action replays from tons of views, and you can even get a few different views while you are playing.

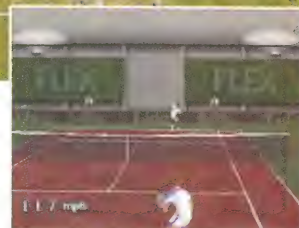
So there you have it. *Break Point* has all the options and fiddly bits to be a corker, but does it have the gameplay to make it all stick together like a bit tennis omelette?

LOVE AM

Right, lets get down to business. The all important controls. What are they? The four main joy pad buttons all do a slightly different type of shot. The square and circle buttons perform top spin and



(RIGHT) COR-BLIMEY! 117 MPH! DON'T GET HIT BY A SERVE GOING THIS QUICKLY OR YOU MAY NEVER PLAY TENNIS AGAIN.



back spin shots respectively. The triangle button is used for lobs, and the cross button deals with your average shots. By – surprise, surprise – combining the skilled use of these buttons with the Dpad you can subtly influence where the shot lands, and its power. If you are clever you can also squeeze a few all conquering smash shots out of your little tennis fellow too. Rather than bash the buttons the second you want to hit the ball as you would in a more arcade type game, in *Break Point* you have to give your player a chance to get his or her swing going. This means that positioning your player is very important

– if they are over the wrong side of the court then you are going to have to dive for it, a tactic that rarely pays off. Once you have started your swing the Dpad comes into play, if you time this right you can pull off some quick and rather tricky to reach shots. Confusing your opponent is the key to *Break Point*, and it is also important not to lose it and mess things up.

There are several players to choose from, each having their own individual characteristics etc. There are four birds and four blokes, and in the great tradition of computer games the men are a bit slower but more powerful, and the ladies are a bit



Release : TBA
Company : OCEAN
Price : £44.95
Players : 1-4
Genre : SPORT



(ABOVE) THE ACTION HEATS UP WITH THIS FOUR-WAY MATCH. (FAR LEFT) THE SUNNY HOTEL COURT. (LEFT) THE USEFUL AND EXCITING NEAR FIRST PERSON PERSPECTIVE.



faster but weaker. You can have mixed doubles, and also unusually mixed singles where the women stand an equal chance.

30-15

There's a plethora of courts to play on, ranging from a hard court outside a hotel to a tension filled centre court. The courts' firmness and integrity effects the way you play, and having a quick whack about on an indoor court is quite different to playing a full game on an impeccably manicured lawn court. To win the cup modes you will have to master all the court types, and learn how all your opponent play. *Break Point* is unusual for a tennis game as it has lots of different characters who can all be selected and each play differently. To help you there is a practice mode where you can have a good, non-aggressive rally with a co-operative computer opponent. It doesn't take that long to get the hang of things, and within no time you'll be serving and volleying with the best of them. At this point it's best to start playing the cup mode, or rope in a few friends for a multiplayer



game. This is the sort of game where you want to get some Robinson's orange barley water in and play it with your mates after you've been down the tennis club.

THE VERDICT

There aren't any glaring flaws, but this game is not perfect. If it's a tennis sim you're after, then *Break Point* is certainly a competent and entertaining choice, but sadly it didn't do that much for me. In the days of super powered hover racers and robot ninjas with expanding swords, tennis seems just a little passe. That's not to say *Break Point* isn't a valid contribution to the world of PlayStation games. Sorry tennis fans, while you're going to love this, it's not going to convert anyone else to your cause.



YOU CANNOT BE SERIOUS

Tennis certainly has had its fair share of characters. And so does *Break Point*. Here they are and in true Blind Date style, a little bit about each one...

ERIC SVENSON:

A Swede. Now has the confidence to be world champion, apparently. He's 22 years old and is rated "good". Nice ankles, but he is more proud of his pecs.



KATE YOUNG:

This plucky teenage Brit is also rated as pretty good, but quite frankly she doesn't have the excellent posture required to be a world champion. Likes wearing her hair short, too.



JAQUES CHEVALIER:

This French thirysomething is apparently the best, with an "amazing serve". Enjoys testing warheads in the south Pacific, and being rude.



CARLA MINNELLI:

Rather scary, Minnelli has "a very powerful build". She holds the record for the fastest serve, but it isn't made clear if it's for blokes and birds or just birds.



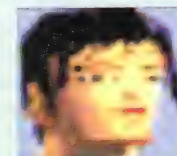
BRANDON KNIGHT:

The proud owner of "an impeccable record" Brandon is sadly an American, and therefore has no understanding of irony. Has all his own teeth.



KEIKO TAKAHASHI:

A difficult opponent who makes the game look easy. Very good at pulling things off, she is always seen in the tennis club bar after a match, usually under a table.



PAUL WILLIAMS:

Arch rival of Jaques, as he was beaten twice by him in the Super Cup. Unfortunately as he is English he will never win. Drives a Renault Clio, ironically.



NATALIE FISCHER:

The best girl player, Natalie. A German with an all round athletic ability. Just don't mention the war, or she will gut you with a fish knife.



Opinion Not the most impressive game on the planet, but it certainly achieves what it sets out to do rather admirably. Pleasant. Amiable. You get the idea. Although I'd rather play something a bit more exiting, how about finishing moves next time, Ocean? TC

PSP RATING...

AFTER EVERY GAME THE SCORES ARE FLASHED UP FOR YOUR PERUSAL. YOU CAN ALSO VIEW A LIST OF STATISTICS OF THE MATCH YOU ARE CURRENTLY PLAYING.

Graphics : 70
Animation : 80
Sound FX : 84
Music : 60
Lastability : 75
Playability : 82

73

Blast Chamber

IN BLAST CHAMBER'S DREARY INTRO, PLAYERS WALK GLOOMILY TOWARDS THE ARENA AS VIDEO-WALLS REPLAY THE EXPLOSIVE DEATHS OF PREVIOUS LOSERS.



One of the fundamental principles of modern science fiction is that 'The Future' will not be a nice place to live. Yes, barring a couple of minor exceptions, 'The Future' is invariably ravaged by war, plague, famine and pollution, and populated by slothful, morally-bankrupt morons who waste their waking hours watching violent rubbish on the telly.

And this unimaginatively bleak vision of things to come is the one most commonly embraced by those soothsayers of the video games world, the manual writers. The plot for Activision's *Blast Chamber*, for example, is so familiar that you could probably write it yourself. For the record, it's the usual old guff about genetically engineered super-athletes competing in an ultra-violent future sport for the entertainment of the blood-thirsty masses – a sort of 18-rated Gladiators, if you will.

You, inevitably, play one of these muscled supermen, raised from birth in a training complex to have only one purpose in life – to win The Game, aka *Blast Chamber*. The action takes place in a vast cubic arena, inside of which up to four competitors (either computer- or human-controlled, thanks to the miracle of multi-tap) rattle around, fighting to gain possession of a glowing crystal and score 'goals' by plonking it in their rivals' throbbing reactors.

IT'S GONNA BLOW!

Here's the gory twist. You see, each player has a ticking timebomb strapped to their broad back, and every time an opponent drops a crystal into their reactor, the timer decreases. And if the timer hits zero... well, let's put it this way, there are no prizes for working out how the game got its name. *Blast Chamber* can be played in one of two styles: Free-For-All, in which players compete against the clock to be the one who died the least number of times; or Eliminator, in which the last man standing is declared the winner.

Naturally, there are numerous power-ups that appear randomly from time to time. When collected, these allow you to do anything from walk on the ceiling or freeze your

foes to change the reactor colours or make the crystal spontaneously explode. Most valuable of all is the Extra Time pick-up, which adds a tension-relieving handful of seconds to your bomb's ever-decreasing timer.

The complications don't end there. For a start, the blast chambers rotate – if you tread on one of the pulsating green arrows lining

the chamber's walls the whole arena will rotate through 90°, throwing your opponents into disarray (and probably giving you a chance to grab the crystal and make a run for the nearest reactor). Some arenas feature hazards, like giant fans, plasma streams, spikes and pits, all of which are instantly fatal to the touch – and as you'd guess, cunning players can use a well-timed rotation to drop their rivals into a bed of lethal spears or such like. Most satisfying...



MANY OF THE BLAST CHAMBERS HAVE A SURREAL, ESCHER-ESQUE FLAVOUR TO THEM.

FOR ALL ARE FUN FOR ONE...

All in all there are 20 different chambers designed for competitive play, and you can either play them individually or one after the other in a Tournament. If you want you can even customise your

DON'T GET IN A SPIN!

If you want an idea of what those puzzle-y Solo Survivor chambers are all about, have a butcher's at this...



HMM, DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THOSE PLASMA PITS...



PUT ONE FOOT WRONG HERE AND IT'S FRYING TONIGHT!



UP THE STAIRS AND ALONG THE PLATFORM. PLUS ÇA CHANGE...



A SWITCH PANEL. I WONDER WHAT TREADING ON THIS DOES...?



THAT'S HANDY – THAT SWITCH HAS MADE A LIFT COME DOWN...



...WHICH HAS TAKEN ME RIGHT UP TO THE TOP OF THE CHAMBER!

Release : DEC '96
Company : ACTIVISION
Price : £44.99
Players : 1-4
Genre : FUTURE SPORT



Opinion Blast Chamber isn't a bad game, just an exceptionally dull one. Although competently programmed and reasonably presented, its main failing is that the basic gameplay just ain't interesting enough. I mean, futuristic tag? Come on... DU

(LEFT) THE GREEN PLAYER SLAMS A CRYSTAL INTO BLUE'S REACTOR, DRASTICALLY REDUCING THE POOR DEVIL'S BOMB TIMER. PREPARE FOR DETONATION - AND HAVE THE HOSE-DOWN CREWS STAND BY...



own championship, selecting the chambers to be fought in and the order they are to be played.

As mentioned earlier, up to four people can compete (or just two if you don't own a multi-tap), with any spare players being put under the control of the CPU. The CPU can be set to one of four difficulty levels, which not only affects the intelligence and aggression of the computer-controlled players but also how much each 'goal' reduces the bomb timers and whether those poor, unfortunate exploding players will take out anyone else standing too close.

Last but not most definitely not least there's a special one-player-only game, Solo Survivor, in which you race against the clock to get the crystal to the reactor in 40

increasingly-tough chambers. In this mode the game takes on a puzzle-like aspect, with the challenge being posed by the blast chamber itself rather than competitors. In addition to the deadly traps from the normal multi-player game, there are crumbling platforms, switches and ladders to contend with, all of which must be successfully navigated to avoid that familiar fiery death.

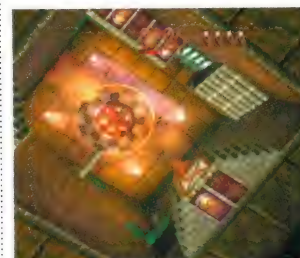
THE FINAL COUNTDOWN!

On paper, then, *Blast Chamber* sounds like quite a laugh. Exploding players... rotating arenas... copious

power-ups... what more could you want from a future sports sim? Well, some gut-wrenching violence, for a start. Remember how the aim of the game is to gain possession of the crystal? Well, guess how you get it... Shoot them? Knife them? Chain-saw them? Strangle them? Nope, you're all wrong; you - now get ready for this - you *push* them over. Yup, that's right - you run up to them, knock them over and then, while they're wriggling about on the ground like some

upturned cockroach, grab the crystal and make a run for it. And this is the sport the telly-viewing millions of the future enjoy? I don't think so - frankly, you'll see rougher action in your local primary school's playground.

The problem with this tackling (if you can call it that) isn't merely down to the fact it's a bit weedy, it also means that the gameplay is annoyingly stop/start: you run about... you knock someone over... you grab the crystal... you get knocked over... you flail about on the floor, unable to do anything for a couple of seconds... There's just no fluidity to the action, something that's a vital



DING-DING, ALL CHANGE! ARGUABLY THE MOST UNIQUE ASPECT OF BLAST CHAMBER'S ARENAS IS THAT THEY ROTATE THROUGH 90°.

ingredient in any sports sim, futuristic or not. Even worse, there's no subtlety to the gameplay. The arenas are fairly simple environments, so the scope for creating game-winning tactics and strategies is limited.

Even the Solo Survivor mode isn't as welcome as it might be. It's entertaining enough, but the puzzles are so simple that you'll have completed all forty chambers in just a few hours. The first ten levels are so easy that you'll complete them on your first go. The main problem with *Blast Chamber* is that it's a none-too-interesting idea concealed by a slick coating of gloss. Strip away the futuristic dressing and the novel rotating arenas and this is essentially a game of tag. And I don't know about you, but I got bored of playing tag when I was ten.



AH-HA, THE CRYSTAL! NOW I'VE JUST GOT TO REACH THAT REACTOR!



TIME TO PUT A BIT OF A SPIN ON THIS SITUATION, I THINK...



YUM, EXTRA TIME! I'VE GOT A FEELING I'M GOING TO NEED THIS!



ANOTHER SWITCH! OH WELL - FAINT HEART NEVER WON FAIR LADY...



IT'S TURNED OFF THE PLASMA BEAMS GUARDING THE PATHWAY TO...



...THE REACTOR CHAMBER! I'M HOME IN ONE PIECE - THIS TIME, ANYWAY.

PSP RATING...

Graphics : 68

Animation : 75

Sound FX : 56

Music : 60

Lastability : 45

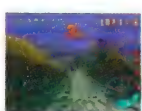
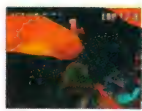
Playability : 66

54

(RIGHT) RUGGED IS A WORD YOU WOULD PROBABLY BE WELL ADVISED TO USE WHEN REFERRING TO HARDCORE 4X4 IN POLITE CONVERSATION.



4x4



ff-roading, eh? Those crazy Americans, with their shopping malls and near total lack of gun-control. Thank goodness for crazy sports like this. If it wasn't for the USA's obsession with them they'd probably all kill each other. Thank goodness, then, for Gremlin's new baby, *Hardcore 4x4*. The only aspects of off-roading it doesn't replicate is the bizarre choice of clobber and outrageous machismo. Which is actually quite disappointing when you consider how

far last month's *Cool Borders* went trying to emulate the full snowboarding experience. Anyhow, *Hardcore 4x4* gives you six different trucks to race around six different courses. This isn't your normal racing though. Like *WipeOut 2097* and *Destruction Derby 2*, *Hardcore 4x4* is racing with a difference. The difference in this case is that you don't even have a road to race on – mad! However, there is a strict set path you have to follow, as sadly the promised short-cuts haven't been included. Making up for the lack of non-linearity are some extraordinarily bumpy courses. Not just little bumps, mind. Huge jutting ridges all over the place. Half the challenge in this game is just to keep your car upright, and with five other racers out to make sure you don't come first, you've got some serious non-tarmac action. All the usual single race/championship/time trial options are available, including a ghost mode, where you can race against one of your previous performances.

Right, we're ready to race. Let's off-road!

sion, that's what it feels like to play *Hardcore 4x4*. At the beginning there is a mad scramble to get into first position, complete with some over the top knocking about that would get "black-flagged" in a real off-road race (right truckers?). For the rest of the laps it's every driver for himself, with all the bumping and bashing causing the trucks damage that is not only represented graphically, with bits of broken truck flying all over the shop and vehicles getting – literally! – bent out of shape, but effects the handling of your metal stallions. Due to the topographically deviant nature of the courses, playing *Hardcore 4x4* really is unlike playing any other racer. Your truck may not be travelling at a very high speed (most of the time you'll be lucky to push 50mph), but there is a very distinctive feeling of exhilaration. After you get used to riding the contours of the tracks rather than just trying to take what seems like the shortest route round a corner, it becomes second nature.

However, random weather conditions conspire to make your life difficult. Mostly the weather is fine, but occasionally rain and snow rear their ugly meteorological heads. Some of the races are at

night too, and if you get a night race with bad weather then you really are in trouble. Some of the trucks are better with certain conditions than others, so sometimes these acts of god can be a blessing in disguise.

REAL LIFE PHYSICS!

The most impressive aspect of *Hardcore 4x4* is the physics model. Each truck isn't modelled as just one solid block, but the movement of each wheel is calculated separately. This means that all the trucks career around the course in a most convincing manner, rebounding off each other and the scenery is most pleasing. If you choose the



Release : NOVEMBER '96
Company : GREMLIN INT
Price : £44.95
Players : 1
Genre : RACING

GRIPPER!

So what does it feel like to play? Imagine balancing on a log whilst in another dimen-



first person perspective then you are guaranteed a moving experience (unfortunately it's the contents of your stomach that is most likely to get repositioned).

Whatever you do, don't play the Mercurial Forest course in first person mode – it will make you feel incredibly nauseous. Perhaps that is apt testament to *Hardcore 4x4*'s realism. Although it's meant to be played as an arcade game, a lot of thought has obviously gone into making it feel authentic. For example, damn fools like me will plump straight for the automatic gear option, but trucking experts will take the time to perfect their skills on the more efficient manual gears system. It also takes time to get to grips with the hand-brake turn button – go crazy with it and you'll just spin all over the shop. There is also a turbo function – tap the acceleration button rapidly and you're given a short burst of speed to help you overtake the opposition. Use



it wisely, though, as you only get three per race, and they're vital to your success.

KEEP ON TRUCKIN'

There are three championship levels, each one getting progressively more difficult. To access the next one you have to finish the one you are on, by scoring more points than anyone else in the league. After each race you can save your progress to memory card, and with the single race and time trial options you can practice individual tracks to your hearts content. So far so good, but alas, there are a few problems.

Firstly, six tracks isn't an awful lot. Due to the complexity of the tracks (loads of bumps and hills in real 3D), there aren't that many. This is a shame, especially as the tracks are all pretty similar (aside from location), and you may well get bored with the limited selection. A selectable mirror mode may have also improved things, and it wouldn't have been too difficult to put in.

Secondly, it can be a real bugger trying to work out in which direction the track is going to go, and sometimes the background scenery is downright misleading. You can't stray off the track at all, as any contact with something you're not meant to be driving on simply bounces you off.

Apart from a few annoyances, and the generally limited gameplay, *Hardcore 4x4* is a mighty fine game, and a right laugh to play (providing



BRIMSTONE IS PERFECT FOR THE VOLCANO COURSE. WHAT A VERY APPROPRIATE NAME. NOT VERY FAST, BUT WITH EXCELLENT SUSPENSION, IF YOU LIKE YELLOW THEN IT'S FOR YOU.



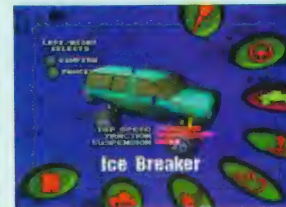
THE ONLY CAR TO BE NAMED AFTER A MINIATURE VACUUM CLEANER, THE DUST DEVIL IS VERY NIPPY INDEED. PERFECT FOR OUTRUNNING YOUR DAUGHTER NICOLE, IN FRANCE.



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A GOOD ALL ROUND VEHICLE, THE BUSH MASTER IS GOOD FOR LEARNER DRIVERS. THE GREEN COLOUR SCHEME ALSO MAKES IT WELL CAMOUFLAGED IN THE FOREST LEVEL.



THIS VEHICLE HELPS BREAK THE ICE AT PARTIES, AND IS ALSO EXTREMELY HANDY ON THE ARCTIC COURSE. LOTS OF ROOM IN THE BACK, AND IT'S PAINTED A SHOCKING CYAN.



MISLEADINGLY THE SIDE WINDER ISN'T A HEAT SEEKING MISSILE, BUT AN ORANGE PICK-UP WITH FAR, FAR TOO MANY LIGHTS ON IT. GOOD FOR NIGHT RACING, AND SHOWING OFF.

you haven't got a weak stomach). It accomplishes what it sets out to do (giving the PlayStation a moderately realistic off-road sim), and does it with enough style to

warrant a purchase even if you have all the other top PlayStation racers. Just don't expect it to last forever.

Opinion *Hardcore 4x4* certainly has its fair share of thrills and spills, and you'd be well advised to take along a sick bag. Sadly, as so often, long term playability is hampered by a less than picnic sized collection of tracks. As long as you're not after long term appeal though, this is certainly worth considering.

TC



PSP RATING...

Graphics :	80
Animation :	82
Sound FX :	65
Music :	60
Lastability :	71
Playability :	84

83

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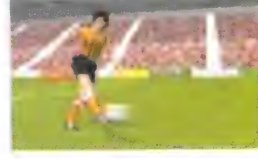
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(ABOVE) THE RENDERED SEQUENCES WHICH ARE SUPPOSED TO DETAIL THE ON-FIELD GOINGS-ON ARE WOEFULLY WEAK, AND REPETITIVE TO THE EXTREME. STICK TO THE PREDICTION OPTION...



EVERYTHING IS EASY TO EFFECT VIA THE SIMPLE ICON SYSTEM USED. TRAINING IS JUST A MATTER OF ALLOCATING HOURS TO THE AREAS OF PASSING AND KICKING.

The popularity of football management games dates back to the ZX81 and Kevin Tomm's seminal Football Manager title. Released across every format known to man, Football Manager was a very simple game of numbers wherein if the player opted for a decent team they would obviously win the league and every other piece of silverware on offer — I say obviously, although Newcastle probably thought they had the Premiership in the bag last year. Since then, numerous pretenders to the golden sheepskin coat have appeared with Domark's *Championship Manager* widely regarded as the Alex Ferguson of those available, but until now the PlayStation has remained managerless, with only *Onside's* half-arsed attempt of book balancing attempting to fill the gap. Enter Anco, a surprise appointment, whose 16bit trophy room is crammed with the various awards given to their long-running *Kick Off* and *Player Manager* series for the Amiga. Now *Kick Off's* long-term guardian, Steve

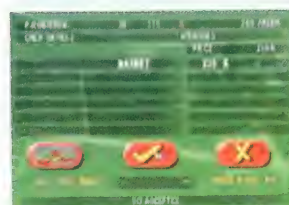
Screech, has turned his attentions to the Sony machine, with an update of *Player Manager* which offers full control over any team from the first, second and third divisions. Every aspect of soccer management appears to be present, with the player eased into the game via a series of hand-picked friendlies, before the board start getting jumpy at the amount your spending and the gate receipts which invariably fall as games are lost. As the game progresses, and your chosen squad (hopefully) progresses to the Premiership thanks to your careful training routines and brilliant budgetary sense. England call-ups and European championships are also added to the mix, while dealings with the press become more high profile. Just ask Kevin Keegan.

Player Manager

tive. The main menu screen offers a choice of default managers (Glenn Hoddle and Brian Robson) in addition to pre-selected screens, but the temptation to enter your own name and sign on as the player-manager for the side of your choice is likely to prove too tempting for most peoples' egos. Having selected a side, the first of many rendered images appears as a coach, physio and the rest of the back room boys are recruited and a quintet of pre-season friendlies selected. The icon system is paired with a cut-away picture of the football ground's offices, within which the separate offices can be seen. Preparation for each game requires visits to the training room, manager's office, the boardroom, the finance office, and the boot

room, each of which open on to a further selection of sub-menus pertaining to that room's content. One problem associated with the management genre is that it is easy to become bogged down in the plentiful options and never actually master the most important aspects of the game. *Player Manager*, to its credit, is always on hand with advice and tips, with your coach always quick to point out if the tactics being used are stale, or if injuries and lack of entry into the transfer market are holding the team back. Similarly, in case the wealth of icons are proving a little overwhelming, a small box at the bottom of the screen is used to explain each icon — a small touch, but incredibly helpful to the novice.

COMPLETE CONTROL
Player Manager is icon-based, and offers a choice of mouse control as opposed to the more sluggish Dpad alterna-



Release : NOVEMBER '96
Company : ANCO
Price : £44.95
Players : 1
Genre : MANAGEMENT

EDITED HIGHLIGHTS

With everything in place, new signings on the bench, and every tactic honed and prepared, *Player Manager* offers a number of ways to view the fruits of your labours. A 'Predict' option guesses the score, the 'Management Scanner' allows the player to view the action stage by stage and offers full details of passes, free kicks, etc. By far the weirdest view, however, are those offered by the 'Match Highlights' icon. The screen is split into four sections, within each a short rendered animation is played to depict the supposed on-field goings-on. As such, every foul is seen in close up, managers are left hanging on to the edge of their seats as a ball soars towards the goal, or headers are met and nodded on for a volley. Which is fine in theory. Sadly, these rendered efforts, while a novelty for the first couple of games, are just so weak it defies belief. A player nods the ball on towards the corner of the box, and all of a sudden the 'keeper is picking it up from out of the net. Similarly, the renders are limited to just over a dozen in number, so as soon as the camera switches to one particular angle, the outcome is almost a cert. Come back Match of the Day all is forgiven.



(1-3) THE BEST EXAMPLE IMAGINABLE THAT SOCCER STRATEGY GAMES ARE BEST LEFT AS TEXT ONLY AFFAIRS.



THE BOYS HIT GOOD

The most important aspect of the game is obviously the on-field performances, as everything else hinges on these. When a team is playing well, the gates will go up and more money becomes available. As such, from this seemingly little acorn, the money can be gathered for future players, a bigger ground to fit in the extra fans, and you can be guaranteed the bard will leave you well alone. Training is effected via a simplistic options system, wherein the team are trained as a group and in teams for specific areas of expertise. Team practice is used to build up stamina, morale, formations and set-pieces, ten hours are available but must be shared between the options in order of importance. As such, if the morale and stamina bars seem fine, then concentrate on corners and free kicks, while also concentrating on two of the four formations available. The preparation for a forthcoming match also allows the manager to view the statistics for the opposition, allowing the player to make the most of their defensive weaknesses or areas lacking practice with a game style that exploits both.

Every aspect of the game build-up is faithfully recreated, but there still seem to be a few irritating features. By looking at both teams stats, it's a dead-cert that if Barnet are rated a percentage higher than, say, Plymouth Argyle, then the score will invariably go in Barnet's favour. Giant-



MATCH OF THE DAY HIGHLIGHTS DETAILS OF EACH GAME, WITH FOULS, SHOTS AND SAVES ALL SHOWN AS AND WHEN THEY HAPPEN.

Opinion There's a hell of a lot of information and options crammed into *Player Manager*, but the game just lacks that slight element of upheaval which is predominant through league football. The outcome of the matches seems to rely too much on the preparatory percentages, and while this is fine after a while when all the team stats are soaring, initially it makes progress very limiting. Every aspect of soccer has been included, with transfers easily effected, dealing with injuries and pre-season friendlies, but ultimately there are too few surprises and the results are predictable at times — something which cannot be said of the real thing. With only Telstar's pathetic *Onside* as competition, this is the best soccer management fans will see for months, but that's hardly a recommendation is it? SM

killing is even less likely, and it seems that *Player Manager* is a little rigid in its thinking and doesn't really allow for an element of chance or luck — after all, if York can knock Everton out of the Coca-Cola Cup, I'm sure that Plymouth could scrape past a team rated only slightly above them.

TEAM WORK

There's no doubting that *Player Manager* is a comprehensive game, and even after several hours of play I kept finding new aspects to the game. As such, bearing in mind the length of a season, this isn't going to be a game that bestows rewards immediately, and much patience is going to be needed to battle to the top of the league. Fine. However, the tedium of training and rejigging the same bars and altering the teams soon gets a trifle dull, and no matter how many new signings you make the actual results still seem to boil down to who out-points the other in the stats league. *Player Manager* is an incredibly complex game made simple, but it doesn't offer any real surprises. As the first of its kind it is a welcome addition to the PlayStation fold, but it comes across as a very formulaic release. Training is true to life in that it's boring, and



the need to deal with the board and the press is minimal if your team is strong, and as such the game doesn't throw any dodgy decisions from above into the mix. If Tottenham's Alan Sugar reckons Shearer isn't worth his asking price, it would be nice if a few more unpredictable elements could have been added with boards rejecting player requests or setting out more restrictions in order to cash in on a team's success. *Player Manager* is an entertaining package and one that fulfils all necessary agendas for a management title, but it fails to set pulses racing due to the predictable nature and lack of surprises. More of an Endsleigh league title than Premiership material.

Graphics : 67
Animation : 53
Sound FX : 45
Music : 65
Lastability : 73
Playability : 63

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Media

MORE ITEMS OF **MERCHANDISE** CURRENTLY AVAILABLE THAT WE BELIEVE WILL BE OF INTEREST TO **PLAYSTATION GAMERS EVERYWHERE.**

WALT DISNEY'S LATEST SMASH FILM, TOY STORY, CERTAINLY CAUSED PROBLEMS IN THE RUN UP TO THE OSCARS, AS ORGANISERS COULD NOT FIND A SUITABLE CATEGORY TO PLACE IT IN. AVAILABLE NOW ON VIDEO TOY STORY TELLS THE TALE OF THE RIVALRY EXISTING BETWEEN TWO TOYS AND THEIR BATTLE FOR THEIR OWNERS AFFECTIONS

VIDEOS

BABYLON 5 VOL 17: HUNTER, PREY & THERE ALL HONOR LIES

**PRICE: £11.99
RELEASED BY: BEYOND VISION
RATING: ★★☆☆**

The *Babylon 5* story arc takes a turn for the humorous in the latest tape in the series.

Writer/producer/all round genius J Michael Straczynski takes a bit of a breather in the first episode as Peter David grabs the writing reins and gallops. Known perhaps best for his ironic writing on comics such as *The Incredible Hulk*, *Aquaman* and currently *Supergirl* as well as his popular *Star Trek* novels, David's take on *Babylon 5* is one which ironically doesn't equal reality – *Babylon 5* gets merchandised. No, it's not being sold, but to keep people on Earth aware of the station, and how wonderful, brilliant etc it is, some bright spark back home elects to mass produce badges, model kits and, be of all, action figures. A handy, poseable G'Kar and Londo? Not everyone is that amused, although whether it's the lack of respect, or the lack of a good likeness in their figurines, that upsets the ambassadors is hard to tell. While Susan Ivanova deals with this, Sheridan

has to cope with an accusation that he has wilfully murdered a Minbari, which puts his friendship with Delenn to the test. The second episode is more standard

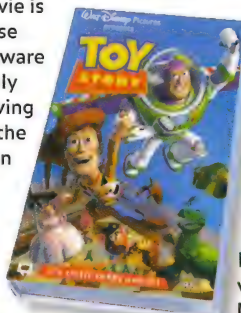
fare, but good nevertheless. What again appears to be a lighthearted look at three days in the life of *Babylon 5* via a news team turns into a nightmare as war breaks out between the Centauri Republic and the Narns. With G'Kar and Londo at each others throats, and Delenn unable to talk to the news team, there are signs that Sheridan may have bitten off more than he can chew by taking over *Babylon 5*.



TOY STORY

**PRICE: £13.99/£14.99
RELEASED BY: WALT DISNEY
RATING: ★★★★★**

What can one say about a film that even caused problems to the Oscars (they had to invent a category just to let it win something)? Its class, its sophistication, its story and its computer generated animation are in a class of their own and, after the outrageous debacle of the widescreen *The Lion King* coming out a few months after the normal release, Disney have seen fit to release the film simultaneously in both versions. It needs to be watched in widescreen (as do most films) otherwise the depth and beauty of the movie is lost. For those who aren't aware (or more likely have been living on Mars for the past eighteen months – your only excuse), *Toy Story* is about the rivalry that exists between two toys for the affections of their owner. Woody is a cowboy doll, slightly limp but well loved and cherished. Enter Buzz Lightyear, a space jock with all mod cons, guaranteed to sweep the affections away from Woody. As such, the film is a parable, not only about modern technology supplanting tradition, but also of the film itself. Many famous cartoonists were up in arms about the movie, claiming Disney had betrayed them etc over using computers to create the images rather than the fingers of craftsmen. As the film shows Buzz and Woody eventually learning to appreciate the skills each has to offer, so *Toy Story* proves to those decryers that there is room in the movie world for every kind of animation. Like most Disney films, *Toy Story* is uplifting, engaging and ultimately very satisfying (if a tad too long) and should sit comfortably on your shelf next to other recent classics such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King* or (at a hefty



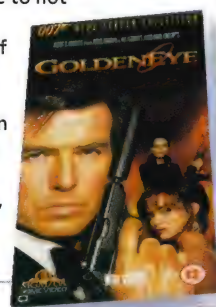
push) the not-quite-up-to-scratch *Pocahontas*.

GOLDENEYE

**PRICE: £12.99/£13.99
RELEASED BY: MGM
RATING: ★★★★★**

Pierce Brosnan's first foray into Bond land is let down by two things. A return to the dire humour that permeated the Roger Moore films, and a plot so pointless and ill-conceived that it stands very little chance of surviving the test of time. What it has going for in its favour is an actor who mixes the physical dexterity and looks of Timothy Dalton with the charm and elegance of Sean Connery, but still makes a

unique contribution himself. That, and the first decent soundtrack in years. Widescreen is, as always, the only way to appreciate good Bond stories (watch the St Petersburg tank chase, or the beach side conversation between Bond and Natalya in the pan and scan version and wince) and MGM have also nicely ensured that the packaging matches their other Bond releases of earlier this year. *GoldenEye* is not a film that absorbs you first time round – it's ideal home video fodder because you need to catch it a couple of times to appreciate the quality actors in it (there simply isn't a duff performance in it) and actually understand why each action set-piece moves to the next. Exactly how, after her base has been blown apart, Natalya finds a healthy dog-sled to commandeer is a bit vague, and Robbie Coltrane's ex-KGB man with an appalling taste in music is a criminal waste, but these are minor points. As said before, the plot is none to hot (a bit of an amazing leap of belief that not only are the Russians a bit in the dark about their own space program, but when one *GoldenEye* is



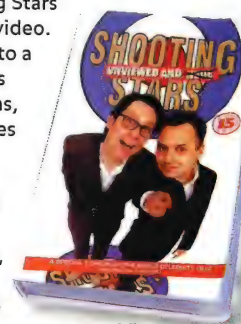
destroyed, they never consider that there might be more) and too much time is spent building up to a climactic battle on a train which is over and done with in minutes before leading on to another climax. Yet despite this, it is difficult not to warm to Brosnan's Bond (though Dalton is still the best, naturally) and if he can convince the writers to hold back on the puns, raised eyebrows and the need for more dodgy CGI (those MiGs, oh God, no...), his second Bond, due next year, should confirm as the Bond of the next century.

SHOOTING STARS

**PRICE: £12.99
RELEASED BY: BBC
RATING: ★★★★★**

Quite simply the funniest programme on television at the moment, BBC Video have recorded a special hour-long edition of the 'celebrity game show' *Shooting Stars* for release on video.

Things get off to a familiar start as Robbie Williams, Julia Carling, Les Dennis and Martin Clunes are introduced as the glum-looking guests, but the first addition to the video becomes apparent as Vic and Bob launch into versions of 'She's a Model' by Kraftwerk and 'Cars' by Tubeway Army. Even more bizarre, however, are renditions of 'I am a Cider Drinker' and 'Firestarter' by team captains Ulrika Jonsson and Mark Lamarr! Following this inspired start things start to get a bit out of hand. While the famous 'True or False', 'Dove from Above' and 'Impersonation' rounds are present, the extended time is basically spent watching Les Dennis being unfunny (and who obviously thinks that 'minge' is the rudest word in the world) and Robbie Williams shouting just because he isn't famous any more. There is also a higher swearing content than in the TV



series, but there is a general feeling of the participants letting their hair down more than in the televised episodes. *Shooting Stars* is one of the most hilarious and original programmes to be screened in years, and while this video isn't representative of it at its best, it is still worth a look. Even if only for George Dawes (he's just a great big baby) dressed as a policeman. (SM)

KNOWING ME, KNOWING YULE WITH ALAN PARTRIDGE

PRICE: £12.99
RELEASED BY: BBC
RATING: ★★★★★

A-ha! Norwich's greatest contribution to TV returns with a Christmas special of the like not seen since the 70s. Set within a mocked up version of his lounge, Alan stumbles through a series of interviews with some of the worst C-grade celebrities imaginable, before the show collapses around his ears following an interview with the director of the BBC and an incident with the largest Christmas cracker in the world (about the height of a large cow, and the length of a small Chinese restaurant). Steve Coogan is brilliant as Alan Partridge a TV presenter not afraid to use his position to blag whatever comes his way, and who enters each interview with a fixed view. He is supremely tactless, sticks to a totally inflexible series of gags (Glenn Ponder, and countless 'Chat' puns) and always hilarious, and even though the outcome of his Christmas special can be seen coming a mile off, it is both funny and also tragic when it happens. As a bonus, BBC Video have also added a small extra scene from a past TV outing, but you really don't need an excuse to buy this. (SM)

BOOKS

BOOK BABYLON 5: SHADOWS PAST & PRESENT

PRICE: £6.99
RELEASED BY: TITAN BOOKS
RATING: ★★★

With a story line by J Michael Straczynski, the television show's creator, Timothy DeHaas story line interweaves

very successfully with the early half of Season Two in this, the latest *Babylon 5* graphic novel from Titan. The story focuses on Garibaldi and his attempts to link something from his past to what is going on at the moment. As tensions are mounting between the Narns and Centauri, Babylon 5's security chief realises that something he and his former boss, Commander Sinclair, discovered could have a lasting effect on the forthcoming war. But Captain Sheridan is not a man who easily allows people to act on hunches and so

Garibaldi, aided by Keffer, go off to solve the mystery for themselves. In this excellently paced adventure, that really reads like a television episode, you learn far more about Garibaldi's motivation, and his loyalties past and present, than ever before. Illustrated beautifully by England's John

Ridgway (one-time artist on that other perennial science-fiction favourite *Doctor Who*), the characters have come to life in a way rarely achieved with any success in a graphic novel. An ideal support to the television series, this novel is as important a part of the *Babylon 5* universe as it could be.

DOCTOR WHO - THE COMPLETELY USELESS ENCYCLOPEDIA

PRICE: £4.99
RELEASED BY: CHRIS HOWARTH AND STEVE LYONS
RATING: ★★★

Bit of an odd-one this. *Doctor Who* fans (well, those with a sense of humour about themselves as well as the show) will love it. It's fast, funny, satirical and frequently almost libellous, but always tasteful. Purchasers who do not understand the subtleties of the show, are unfamiliar with the in-jokes and oft-heard anecdotes, will wonder what it's all about. And there is its problem. It's a mass-market book, produced for a more specialised than normal market. You need to be 'in the know', aware of the personalities the

writers are parodying to fully get 90% of the jokes.

Nevertheless, it does feature some amusing jibes at writers, directors and actors, points out alarming continuity goofs and even has a dig at other books published about the series. Lyons and Howarth were both responsible for the equally amusing *Red Dwarf Programme Guide* a few years back (which, it has been rumoured, the programme makers were none to keen on, a very good incentive to buy, therefore) and they've transferred that style of humour over to *Red Dwarf's* maiden aunt with a fair degree of success. Obviously this is not a book for the "Oh, I've not watched it since Jon Pertwee left" brigade, but for those who like wry humour, and as an antidote to the plethora of hard-nosed, almost anorakish *Doctor Who* books out here, this is fun.

I AM THE DOCTOR: JON PERTWEE'S FINAL MEMOIR

PRICE: £16.99
RELEASED BY: VIRGIN
RATING: ★★

Everyone should have a hero, and alongside Trevor Brooking, Jon Pertwee was one of mine. As *Doctor Who* he was brilliant, and always had the best-looking assistants, gadgets, adventures, and even a flying car. Can't be bad. As such, I've always had a soft spot for Jon's escapades as *Doctor Who*, and his recent death was a real loss to the entertainment world. With Virgin coming to the end of their *Doctor Who* range of books (the BBC have reclaimed the rights to the series), *I Am The Doctor* is one of the last

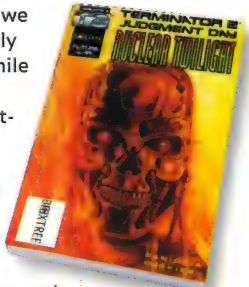
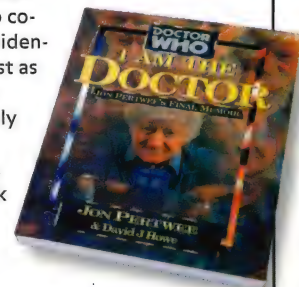
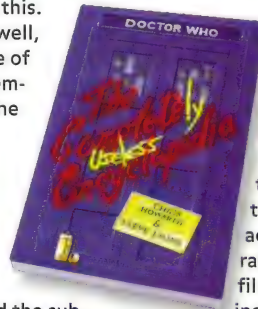
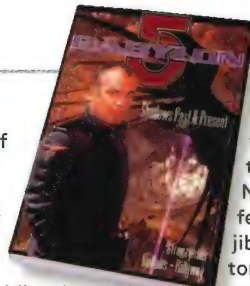
large format hard-backs in their series. Written by Pertwee himself (although I have a feeling co-writer David J. Howe did the donkey work), the book follows the actor's work through radio, television, and films. Although bearing in mind the title, the book concentrates on his role as television's most popular Time Lord. Considering how much he packed into his 70-odd years, the book comes across as rather lightweight, with all-too familiar photos and anecdotes and very little new material. Some of the more

personal photos are quite interesting, and Pertwee is frank about his likes and dislikes as an actor, but ultimately the book is too sketchy. Virgin recently released a 'Third Doctor handbook' (also co-written by Howe, coincidentally) which features just as many quotes and even more *Who* trivia but only costs a fiver. As a big a hero of mine as he was, I'm afraid even I'd think twice before parting with seventeen quid for this. (SM)

TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY - NUCLEAR TWILIGHT

PRICE: £8.99
RELEASED BY: BOXTREE
RATING: ★★★★★

Set immediately after the events of James Cameron's *Terminator 2* film (the book begins with Sarah Connor driving along the same road), *Nuclear Twilight* tells the story of John Connor's battle against Skynet. Starting with the Connors and a brave band of survivors emerging after the foretold nuclear devastation, the book reintroduces characters from the film several years later (Danny Dyson, for example) and also expands upon the heroics of Kyle Reese who is fated to become John's father. The book is tightly plotted and avoids the temptation to simply pad the story out with battle after battle. Instead, we see that John is constantly doubting his motives, while the devious nature of Skynet is superbly depicted. The book also manages to dovetail nicely into the film, it succeeds (if you catch my drift), thanks to a neat twist in the tail. *Nuclear Twilight* is an incredibly well drawn and written book, and is a worthy successor to one of the all-time great action movies. (SM)



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What Is It?

Yesterday I was in Tecno, the electrical shop, looking for a new game to buy, and I saw some guy looking at what claimed to be an add-on which "connected your PlayStation or Saturn to your PC". Nice thought, but this guy had the only one and I had to rush off. Would it be possible to shed some light as to what this actually is and what it does.

Anonymous

It could be anything really. Chances are it's a device to enable you to save your games to PC. Conceivably it could be a game duplication device, but it's highly doubtful. However, in 1997 you will be able to buy the home development Yaroze system, that allows you to develop PlayStation games with your PC. See this month's news page for more details.

Drive By Shooting

I'm a big fan of racing and shooting games, and although I don't have the chance to experience the link-up game, I do enjoy two-player modes. Can you recommend *Andretti racing '97* which I hear has a split-screen mode? As an aside, my favourite 'shoot 'em up' game is by far *Virtua Cop*, so which PlayStation game would you say to be most like *Virtua Cop* and just as good? One more thing, when is *Lethal Enforcers* going to be released and will it be compatible with the light gun shown in Plus Points, Volume 2 Issue 2?

Paul Fernandes, London

Andretti Racing has no split screen option, but Need for Speed does. As for a Virtua Cop style game, give Die Hard Trilogy a go - it's even better than Sega's shooter. Also watch out for a conversion of Namco's Time Crisis. As for Lethal Enforcers' light gun compatibility...it seems highly likely, but we won't know till we see a final version.

TIPS TRAUMA

I recently bought the excellent *Tekken 2* and was a little



more than impressed. But, I have encountered some difficulties with lots, well all, of the Paul Phoenix, King and Nina Williams moves. I have a moves list for each of these but with most of them, no matter how hard I try, I am unable to pull them off. Whether it's just me I don't know, but I'm doing exactly what the magazine (no names mentioned) says to do. Could you send me the correct moves for the characters mentioned, please? Gavin Batman, N. Yorks (Yes it is my real name, and yes I know all the jokes)

Sadly we don't send out personal tips, but thanks for the compliments. However, try calling the Sony Powerline for help - the number is 0881505505, and hopefully they'll be able to help. One last thing - congratulations on having the best name of anyone who has written in to us.

SCART Questions

I have recently purchased a Scart television and I was told that a Scart lead should give a better picture, better sound, remove borders and speed up the games. However, when I went into my local shop and asked for a PlayStation Scart lead, he gave me a lead (costing £10) which had a Scart on one end but had three different parts on the other which went into the RFU sockets. I set it up and got a picture but nothing

had changed. If anything the sound was worse!

I went back to the shop and got a refund and reverted to my normal RFU adaptor. What should a Scart lead do? I know about the Euro AV cable but I didn't think that it got rid of borders. Please help me as I have no-one else to turn to.

B. Field, Herts

A Scart to AV-multi out will give you better picture clarity, but it won't give you much in the way of better sound, or even speed up games or remove the borders. If you fancy giving one a go, try Sony's own Euro AV cable, but be warned, they don't come cheap.

SNORE...

I write in full support of H. Falstaff's statements made in your last edition. I feel, however, that you may have missed the main angle of their argument. He/she was attempting to point out that people joined together and refused to purchase *Mortal Kombat*, so the PAL consumer should have again joined together and refused to purchase *Resident Evil*, but being donkeys they don't. Falstaff was not condemning acclaim for profiteering

but praising them, and was instead condemning Virgin. It is a pity people didn't apply the lessons learned by the boycott of *Mortal Kombat* to Virgin's edition of *Resident Evil* and future games.

Acclaim lost money due to

its non-violent *Mortal Kombat*, thus returned the violence for *Mortal Kombat II*. If the public had refused to purchase *Resident Evil*, then surely *Resident Evil II* would remain fully intact.

By Falstaff's line of reason as you yourselves point out, Virgin like Acclaim should have lost out, but due to the stupidity of the PAL consumers they made a profit! I also agree with Falstaff's attack on PAL machines, be honest, they are shite and are vastly inferior to their NTSC counterparts, can you honestly say you don't prefer NTSC machines and, given the choice, you wouldn't rather own an NTSC machine? I doubt it very much.

Finally, if Virgin's *Resident Evil* didn't sell then surely *Resident Evil II* would arrive uncut! Hence your argument would fall flat on its face as I have stated above.

S. Hierro, Tyne & Wear

ZZZ...

I think that Aaron Doig who wrote the letter saying that *Resident Evil* is crap, is a stupid tosser who hasn't got a clue about what makes a good game. He said himself that he was "probably part of a small percentage who don't like the game." Yeah well, he's right, he's the only one. I mean come on, the game is bloody marvellous, the graphics, the energy music, the blood, I was amazed, I didn't know that the PlayStation could handle stuff like this. He also said that the puzzles were 'Stupid' and "After all, you're just running around a mansion." This seems to me that he hasn't got the brains or intelligence to solve them. So my conclusion about Aaron Doig, based on the information presented in this letter, is that he's a thick, sad, stupid tosser. Thank you.

Andrew Taylor, Hartlypool

You know that lad called Aaron Doig from Newcastle. He's a disgrace. Who does he think he, is talking about *Resident Evil* like that. I per-

CONNECTION
PROBLEMS,
LIGHT-GUN
QUESTIONS,
MYSTERIOUS
MACHINES,
AND, OH DEAR,
DIVORCE. IT'S
ALL GO IN THIS
MONTH'S PLUS
POINTS.



sonally own that game and I think it is the best thing since sliced bread! All you people who are about to go and buy *Resident Evil*, don't let this lad put you off.

Resident Evil is excellent in every way, stunning graphics, stunning sound, stunning gameplay. That's a perfect description of *Resident Evil* and by the way, that lad is a very sad PlayStation owner! **Darren Morris, Manchester**

I would like to comment on Aaron Doig from Newcastle's comments on *Resident Evil* (issue one of the new PlayStation Plus). Is that lad completely bonkers or what? *Doom* and *Wipeout* are not a touch on *Resident Evil* and to say it should have been rated in the 70 plus zone is completely insane, maybe you'd have been better off living in the 70's yourself mate and we'll all live in the 90's enjoying the brilliant *Resident Evil*, so get a life and give the game to someone who'll enjoy it. It's the best 40 quid I've ever spent!

I'd also like to add a bit of advice to all those people who have had trouble loading PlayStation games that are scratched, simply turn your PlayStation upside down, make sure that it's on a hard flat surface (ie floor or table) and there you have it, no stutters at all. This is due to Sony's crap lens which is too far away from the disc when upright and cannot read the disks when scratches occur. When upside down the disc is closer to the lens allowing the lens to load the games trouble free. **Stewart Dickson, Leicestershire**

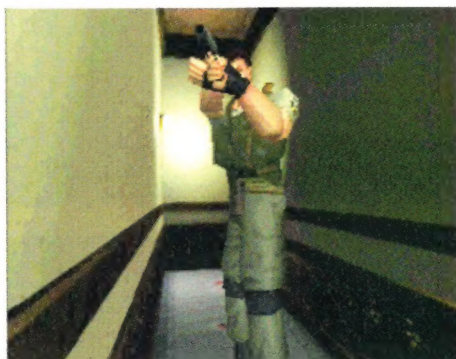
Okay, okay, that's enough hate mail for Aaron Doig. As for turning the machine upside down, we find that tilting it on its side works pretty well. However, when trying a tip like this please remember that we at PlayStation Plus cannot be held responsible for any damage that your beloved PlayStation may incur when doing odd things to it.

GIRL TROUBLE

I recently read an article in my girlfriends magazine (I picked it up by mistake!) concerning a man who bought a PlayStation and his wife divorced him because he spent all his wages on new games and even took days off work just to play them.

I myself found this quite amusing as I have often had an argument with my missus for hoggin' the television while Brookside is on (well, I was playing F1 at the time so you can hardly blame me), and this is not the first time I've heard of this sort of thing happening.

I think that Playstations should come with a warning such as: Only buy this product of you are single. If you are married, engaged etc you are asking for trouble (or wait 'till she's gone out to before



you use it).

Anyway, the point is, why don't you start a new section in the magazine for readers letters of divorces, bust ups or nightmare stories in general concerning their sad addictions. I think it would make a more interesting read than some of the drivel you readers write about. Or is this just a crap idea? **Peely, England**

Let's face it, if you let your PlayStation get in the way of lurve then you are probably not worth the attention that you have received in the first place. Mind you, if any or our readers do have any stories about their relationship problems caused by your console, why not send them in? The best one will win a packet of Love Hearts



RESIDENT EVIL IS THE TARGET OF MORE READERS' RAMBLINGS. WE'VE SEEN AND HEARD IT ALL SO CAN YOU STOP GOING ON ABOUT IT NOW - PLEASE?

FAQ

THE MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS OF THE MONTH ARE, ONCE AGAIN, MET WITH STRAIGHT ANSWERS.

Q Last month you gave out a cheat for *Psygnosis' Formula 1*, and I'll be damned if I can get it to work. What is going wrong?

A Right: you **MUST** do it on the qualification screen, you **MUST** hold down select, and you **MUST** do it rather quickly. Follow the instructions or it simply won't work. Also: the first command for the gibberish and buggy modes are wrong - simply change it round from right to left or left to right. They should now be Gibberish Mode: Left, Cir, Up, Down, Down, Right, Cir, Squ, Squ, and Buggy Mode: Right, Up, Tri, Left, Up, Squ, Tri. Good luck!

Q Why do none of the reviews I read on *Formula 1* mention that the graphics in the game would freeze and then start again while you were racing, as if the PlayStation was finding it hard to keep the race loading in smoothly.

I ended up getting my money back for the game as I found it happened mostly just before a corner, making taking the corner properly practically impossible.

Is the game too demanding for PlayStation to run smoothly?

A It's true, *Formula 1* does have a few minor bugs, but nothing like what you have experienced. The review copy we had slowed a little in link-up 2-player mode, but during the solo game we encountered very few problems. Perhaps it was just a problem with that particular copy of the game. For more information ring Psygnosis on (0151) 282 3000.

Q Recently I bought GTI's *Final Doom*, and on the back of the box it says that there are 64 levels. I have played all the way through it and I have only seen 32. Are there 64 levels, or have I been ripped off?

A As far as we can tell, there are only 32 levels in *Final Doom*, and anyone who says otherwise is mistaken. Remember, always read the PlayStation Plus review for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Q I am an avid flight-sim enthusiast, and so far every flying game has been a largely simplistic arcade game with a few knobs on. Will we ever see a proper flight-sim on the PlayStation, and why have we not done so already? Can't the PlayStation handle it?

A The PlayStation has no problem with complex simulations, as games like *Formula 1* have already shown. The problem is that software companies seem to be unsure about whether the PlayStation market is yet ready for a full blown flight simulation. However, things are beginning to change, with the first big step coming from Ocean, who are converting their PC smash TFX to the PlayStation. If they pull it off, and if it sells well (almost guaranteed if they don't really mess up the conversion), then we will probably see loads more "serious" games for Sony's little box of tricks. And with a PlayStation costing only a tenth of a decent PC, then why should simulation fans have to fork out to try their hand at a proper flight sim? See this month's new for more details.

Q Do you know when Konami's Enforcer gun is coming out? I am desperate for some *Virtua Cop* style shooting. Help!

A There is no official release date for Konami's lightgun as yet, but there are alternatives already available. Check out Spectravideo's *Predator* gun for example, which is tested in the news section of this very issue.

Next Month

Soul Edge

NAMCO RETURNS TO THE PLAYSTATION WITH THE BRILLIANT SUCCESSOR TO TEKKEN 2. SOUL EDGE IS MORE THAN JUST A SEQUEL THOUGH, AND TAKES THE 3D BEAT 'EM UP TO THE NEXT LEVEL WITH ITS INNOVATIVE WEAPON SYSTEM, IN WHICH FIGHTERS HACK AT THEIR OPPONENTS WITH SWORDS AND AXES! WITH DETAILED GRAPHICS, THE LIKES OF WHICH HAVE YET TO BE SEEN, THIS REALLY IS THE FUTURE OF THE FIGHTING GAME.



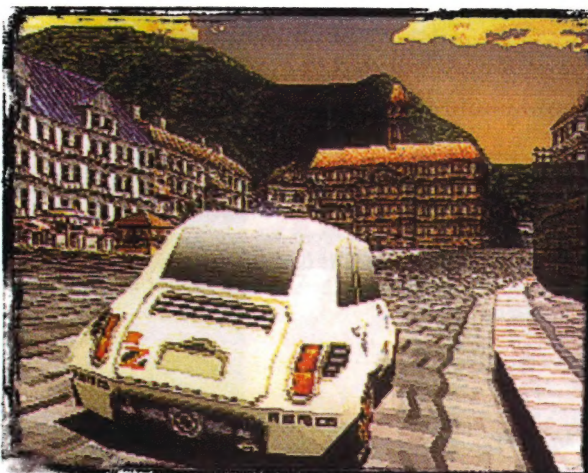
Resident Evil 2

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE TO RETURN TO RACCOON CITY, THE ZOMBIES ARE BACK! PLAYSTATION PLUS TRAVELS TO JAPAN TO DROOL OVER THE HOTTEST PROPERTY OF 1997, RESIDENT EVIL 2, AND REUNITES THE HEROES OF STARS AS THEY ATTEMPT TO RID THIS FOUL EVIL ONCE AGAIN. RELIVE THE NIGHTMARE OF CAPCOM'S HORROR STORY IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE.



Rage Racer

WE'LL ALSO BE FEATURING RAGE RACER AS PART OF OUR EXHAUSTIVE LOOK TO THE YEAR AHEAD. CONCENTRATING ON THE BIGGEST GAMES OF '97, THIS IS AN ESSENTIAL PREVIEW THAT YOU SIMPLY CAN'T AFFORD TO MISS. ADDITIONALLY WE'LL BE COVERING ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING EVER RELEASED FOR THE PLAYSTATION IN THE ULTIMATE BUYER'S GUIDE FOR THE SONY MACHINE, SO WATCH OUT FOR NEXT MONTH'S WHOPPING 200-PAGE ISSUE - IT'S A MONSTER!



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